

Dignity, Diversity, and Complementarity: The Lay Faithful in the Ecclesiology of Pope John Paul II

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THE UNHAPPY OCCURRENCES of sexual abuse of minors by priests; the extent, persistence, tone, and slant of media coverage; and the reactions that have followed brought to the fore the issue of the relationship between the lay faithful and the hierarchy in the Church. To say that the trust and confidence that the lay faithful have for the hierarchy is undergoing erosion is to state the obvious. Some have voiced the opinion that governance of the Church should be in the hands of the lay faithful.

Yet, as scholars of Church history often point out, the Church is no stranger to conflict. Apart from the Christological controversy and other doctrinal conflicts, there are, in fact, examples of conflicts between the people and those who exercise authority in the Church. Already, in the New Testament, the contents, language, and style of 1 and 2 Corinthians show that the relationship between the Apostle Paul and the Church in Corinth was characterized by friction. The letter of Clement of Rome to the same Church in Corinth occasioned by the deposition of some of its presbyters by some of its members gives the impression that friction between the members and the leaders of the Church remained long after Paul's letters to the same Church. And, in a relatively recent past, preceding the firestorm of recent months, one can cite the example of the reaction to the publication of Paul VI's *Humanae vitae*.

In the midst of conflicts, it is difficult to avoid the temptation of adopting an either-or position. In our own time, the lay faithful and the pastors are pitched against each other, and sometimes the clergy and the bishop

are like opposition parties in a raucous parliamentary session. The words of Jean-Marie Roger Tillard capture the scene we are watching, “Our communities are, today, divided by a frontier. On one side of it is the clergy, on the other side is the laity.”¹

Using the postsynodal exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, I shall argue in this article that Pope John Paul II, following the example of the Second Vatican Council as well as the Patristic and New Testament texts which inspired the council, presents an ecclesiology in which the common dignity and fundamental equality of the baptized are affirmed alongside the diversity and complementarity of their gifts. If the Church of our time is to be faithful to apostolic tradition explicated at Vatican II, this vision of the Church will need to be taken seriously.

Baptismal Dignity and Biblical Imagery

The place of the lay faithful in the ecclesiology of Pope John Paul II can be discerned from the affirmation of their dignity and identity, and in the articulation of their mission in the exhortation *Christifideles Laici*. In it, the baptismal dignity of the lay faithful is expressed by way of reference to the gospel parable of the laborers hired for the vineyard and the biblical imagery of the vine and the branches. Pope John Paul II describes the lay members of Christ’s faithful people as “those who form that part of the People of God which might be likened to the laborers in the vineyard mentioned in Matthew’s gospel” (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 1; Mt 20).

The vineyard into which Christ has sent the lay members of his faithful is the whole world. This is not to be interpreted as excluding the lay faithful from active presence and participation within the Church. The vocation of the lay faithful is unique. But that does not exclude them from sharing in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission of Christ. Their mission is to bring about a transformation that conforms with the plan of God, since the call to work in the vineyard is not exclusively addressed to the clergy and religious but to everyone in the Church. It is a vocation to work with Christ in a

new manner of active collaboration among priests, religious, and lay faithful; the active participation in the liturgy, in the proclamation of the Word of God and catechesis; the multiplicity of services and tasks entrusted to the lay faithful and fulfilled by them; the flourishing of groups, associations, and spiritual movements as well as a lay commitment in the life of the Church; and in the fuller and meaningful participation of women in the development of society (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 2)

¹ Jean-Marie Roger Tillard, OP, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 211.

The economic, social, political, and cultural affairs of our world describe the vineyard that the world is. It is a world of religious indifference, atheism, and de-Christianization which call for re-evangelization, a world in which the very denial of religion manifests a profound need for religion, a world in which various forms of violation of the dignity of the human person take place regularly, a world buffeted by conflict and yearning for peace. Faced with this situation, the Church places her hope on Jesus Christ who himself is the Good News and the bearer of joy. According to Pope John Paul II, "The lay faithful have an essential and irreplaceable role in this announcement and in this testimony: through them the Church of Christ is made present in the various sectors of the world, as a sign and source of hope and of love" (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 7).

But the parable of the hired laborers does not offer an exhaustive description of the lay faithful. Pope John Paul II joins it to the imagery of the vine and the branches by pointing out that the vine is an expression of the mystery of the people of God. Consequently, in line with the Old Testament application of the imagery of the vine to the chosen people, in line with Jesus' use of the same imagery to explain the mystery of the kingdom, and since Jesus himself said "I am the vine and you [his disciples] are the branches" (Jn 15:5), it can be asserted that the "lay faithful are seen not simply as laborers who work in the vineyard, but as themselves being a part of the vineyard" (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 8). Quoting from the Second Vatican Council, Pope John Paul II emphasizes that the whole Church is like branches of the vine deriving life and fruitfulness from Christ who is the true vine. She gratuitously receives through Christ the very life and love of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With this communication of Trinitarian love, she can relive the very communion of God. She can manifest it and communicate it in history through her mission (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 6).

With these in mind, it can be said that the Church's mystery as communion, which has the *ad intra* Trinitarian communion as analogue, provides a way of understanding the identity, dignity, and mission of the lay faithful. "Only from inside the Church's mystery of communion is the 'identity' of the lay faithful made known, and their fundamental dignity revealed. Only within the context of this dignity can their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world be defined" (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 8). The lay faithful fully belong to the Church and to its mystery even as their vocation has a unique character (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 9). The basic description of the lay faithful can become more explicit when it is referred to the sacrament of Baptism. The branches, of which the lay faithful are parts, become grafted (incorporated) into Christ through the

sacrament of Baptism. That they fully belong to the Church, just as the branches fully belong to the vine, comes from their baptismal regeneration in the life of the Son of God, union with Christ and his body the Church, and anointing in the Holy Spirit which makes Christians into spiritual temples. This spiritual anointing, Pope John Paul II reminds the Church, makes of the lay faithful sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission of Christ.

With this spiritual “unction,” Christians can repeat in an individual way the words of Jesus: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me.” . . . Thus with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation, the baptized share in the same mission of Jesus as the Christ, the Savior-Messiah. (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 13)

One must not fail to remark here that by speaking of the sharing of the lay faithful in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission of Christ as a gift that flows from their Baptism, Pope John Paul II was reaffirming a teaching of the Second Vatican Council. For, according to the council, “By regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the baptized are consecrated into a spiritual house.”² The Holy Father, conscious of the fact that Vatican II was itself in continuity with the living tradition of the Church, locates a patristic explanation of this teaching in Augustine’s Christological and ecclesiological interpretation of Psalm 26:

David was anointed king. In those days only a king and a priest were anointed. These two persons prefigured the one and only priest and king who was to come, Christ (the name “Christ” means “anointed”). Not only has our head been anointed but we, his body, have also been anointed . . . therefore *anointing* comes to all Christians, even though in Old Testament times it belonged only to two persons. Clearly we are the Body of Christ because we are all “anointed” and in him are “christs,” that is “anointed ones,” as well as Christ himself, “The Anointed One.” In a certain way, then, it thus happens that with head and body the whole Christ is formed.³

This patristic and conciliar consciousness of the dignity and vocation of the lay faithful was clearly echoed at the beginning of his pontificate when Pope John Paul II affirmed:

He who was born of the Virgin Mary, the carpenter’s Son as he was thought to be Son of the living God (confessed by Peter), has come to

² Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 10.

³ Augustine, Ennar. in Ps. XXVI, II, 2: *Enarrationes Psalmos*, 38, 154 ff.

make us “a kingdom of priests.” The Second Vatican Council has reminded us of the mystery of this power and of the fact that the mission of Christ—Priest, Prophet-Teacher, King—continues in the Church. Everyone, the whole People of God, shares in this threefold mission.⁴

While the parable of the workers in the vineyard helps to see the lay faithful as workers in the vineyard that the world is, the imagery of the vine and the branches helps to see the same lay faithful as part of the vineyard that the Church is. Therefore, according to Pope John Paul II, the lay faithful are not just workers in the vineyard, they themselves are a part of the vineyard since the gospel image of the vineyard describes the Church. This permits us to situate the lay faithful within the conciliar ecclesiology of communion which is the key to any authentic interpretation of Vatican II. Pope John Paul II was keenly aware of the centrality and foundational character of this ecclesiology to Vatican II when he wrote that, “only from inside the Church’s mystery of communion is the identity of the lay faithful made known, and their fundamental dignity revealed. Only within the context of this dignity can their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world be defined” (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 8). The baptized are regenerated to become “children in the Son,” “members of Christ and members of the body of the Church.” Baptism brings them into the *sanctorum communionem*, which Pope John Paul II explains by using words spoken by his predecessor Pope Paul VI after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. By using these words spoken by Pope Paul VI right after the council ended, Pope John Paul II himself demonstrates that, contrary to what some commentators claim, his own reflection is within on-going tradition. For Pope Paul VI,

the meaning of the Church is a communion of saints. “Communion” speaks of a double, life-giving participation: the incorporation of Christians into the life of Christ, and the communication of that life of charity to the entire body of the faithful, in this world and in the next, union with Christ and in Christ, and union among Christians in the Church.⁵

The vital union that exists between the Vine (Christ) and the branches (the faithful) comes about through baptismal regeneration. The same baptismal regeneration confers a common dignity and a fundamental equality among all the baptized, and the common dignity that flows from Baptism

⁴ John Paul II, “Homily at the Beginning of his Pastoral Ministry as Supreme Shepherd of the Church,” October 22, 1978, *Acta Apostolicae Sedi* 70 (1978): 946.

⁵ Paul VI, Wednesday general audience (December 8, 1965), *Insegnamenti*, IV (1966): 794.

imposes on the lay faithful the duty of participating in the mission of the Church.⁶ From Baptism comes communion, from this communion we find the dignity and vocation of the lay faithful. By implication, one cannot speak of the dignity and vocation of the lay faithful outside ecclesial communion. Outside the “communion of saints,” Christ’s faithful are like branches cut off from the vine. The branches belong, not to themselves, but to the vine. The dignity of the disciple of Christ is rooted in the fact that he or she is incorporated to Christ and belongs to Christ. The patristic ecclesiology of Augustine and Cyprian, and of Clement of Alexandria and John Chrysostom, to use but these examples taken from Jean-Marie Roger Tillard’s *Flesh of Christ, Flesh of the Church*,⁷ enables us to see the fundamental identification between Christ the Head and his body the Church. The dignity and vocation of the lay faithful can never be seen apart from communion in the Church and with the Church, and there is no communion with the Church where there is no communion with the bishop who is Vicar of Christ in the local Church confided to his care in communion with the Successor of Peter. Consequently, being separated from the ecclesial body of Christ while claiming to be in union with Christ are hardly reconcilable.

The common dignity of Christ’s faithful does not exclude diversity and complementarity in the Church. Yet, within this diversity there is hierarchy. Such will be the next consideration in this essay.

Baptismal Dignity, Diversity, and Complementarity in the Church that is Communion

In moments of conflict, the Church always runs the risk of being turned into an arena of power struggle. At times when the clergy is rightly or wrongly perceived as incompetent, unholy, uncaring, and autocratic, there may be a strong temptation to repudiate the authority of the Church’s pastors, even to the point of wresting power and authority from the clergy. Consequently, this is not a new temptation in the history of the Church. What is perhaps new is the attempt to provide a theological justification for such a step through recourse to the common dignity and fundamental equality that come from baptismal regeneration. Martin

⁶ Concerning this common dignity and shared responsibility, Pope John Paul II refers to the Second Vatican Council. “As members, they share a common dignity from their rebirth in Christ, they have the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection. They possess in common one salvation, one hope, and one undivided charity.” *Lumen Gentium*, no. 32.

⁷ Jean-Marie Roger Tillard, OP, *Flesh of Christ, Flesh of the Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992).

Luther already put forward the same argument in his letter *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*. Basing his argument on Baptism, Luther sought to collapse the distinction between what he called the temporal estate and the spiritual estate in order to place the governance of the Church and the interpretation of Scripture in the hands of laypeople, to be more specific, the German nobility.

Since those who exercise secular authority have been baptized with the same Baptism, and have the same faith and the same gospel as the rest of us, we must admit that they are priests and bishops and we must regard their office as one which has a proper and useful place in the Christian community. For whoever comes out of the water of Baptism can boast that he is already a consecrated priest, bishop, and pope, although of course it is not seemly that just anybody should exercise such office. Because we are all priests of equal standing, no one must push himself forward and take it upon himself, without our consent and election, to do that for which we all have equal authority. For no one dare take upon himself what is common to all without the authority and consent of the community. And should it happen that a person chosen for such office were deposed for abuse of trust, he would then be exactly what he was before. Therefore, a priest in Christendom is nothing else but an officeholder. As long as he holds office, he takes precedence; where he is deposed, he is a peasant or a townsman like anybody else. Indeed, a priest is never a priest when he is deposed. But now the Romanists have invented *characters indelebiles* and say that a deposed priest is nevertheless something different from a mere layman. They hold the illusion that a priest can never be anything other than a priest, or ever become a layman. All this is just contrived talk, and human regulation.

It follows from this argument that there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes, and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status. They are all of the spiritual estate, all are truly priests, bishops, and popes. But they do not all have the same work. This is the teaching of St. Paul in Romans 12:4–5 and 1 Corinthians 12:12 and in 1 Peter 2:9, as I have said above, namely, that we are all one body of Christ the Head, and all members one of another. Christ does not have two different bodies, one temporal, the other spiritual. There is but one Head and one body.⁸

In the current climate of crisis and controversy within some local churches in Roman Catholicism, there are, on the part of some who are,

⁸ Martin Luther, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, in *Martin Luther: Three Treatises*, trans. Charles M. Jacobs and Rev. James Atkinson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 13–15.

rightly or wrongly, dissatisfied with the way the Church is governed, deliberate theoretical and practical efforts to substantially erode, and eventually remove, the authority of the clergy—the *hiereus-arche*. The argument is premised on the common dignity and fundamental equality of the faithful that come through baptismal regeneration. It is then considered legitimate to draw the conclusion that the lay faithful should “control” the Church. But I remark that while the premise of their argument is a position evidently shared with Pope John Paul II, the ecclesiology of those who argue this way is patently at odds with the ecclesiology of this Successor of Peter. For in John Paul II’s ecclesiology—that is, if one can speak of his ecclesiology in the proper sense of the word, since his writings and pronouncements, in my opinion, point to his appropriation of Vatican II’s ecclesiology—the recognition and affirmation of the common dignity, fundamental equality, and responsibility of all those regenerated by Baptism do not, by any justifiable theological means, amount to a nullification of diversity of charisms and ministries in the Church. Neither do they imply an abolition of the hierarchy. The Church that is communion is a communion of charisms, and, not only is it the case that there is hierarchy in this communion, it is also the case that a healthy Church is not without a hierarchy, and a healthy Church is one in which there is communion within the hierarchy, and communion between the hierarchy and the lay faithful.

What is being presented here is not John Paul II’s doctrinal innovation. Rather, one is dealing here with an ecclesiology in continuity with the apostolic origins of the Church, in as much as it echoes the conciliar recognition and reaffirmation of the Spirit-willed existence of diversity and hierarchy in the heart of ecclesial communion, a conciliar *prise de position* whose inspiration is both patristic and apostolic. To buttress this statement, we may retrace our steps.

The first step is to recall what is often forgotten in retrieving the ecclesiology of communion at Vatican II, that the constitution *Lumen Gentium* not only has a chapter on the people of God, it also has a chapter on the hierarchy. Consequently, to avoid a hermeneutics of monumental injustice, which will be to the detriment of the beautiful ecclesiological insights of the council, one would need to avoid reading one chapter in a way that ignores or de-emphasizes the doctrinal import of the other. Implicit in this division and in the doctrinal content of *Lumen Gentium* is the double recognition of diversity of charisms, and of the hierarchy as one of such diverse charisms.

The second step is to recall that even where the council speaks of the common priesthood of the people of God, it is clear that the intention

was neither to blur the distinction between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood, nor to reduce the Church to an aggregate of priests.⁹ Concerning the distinction between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood, the point is made by the council that the difference is not merely in degree but most importantly in essence. Consequently, the Second Vatican Council was not by any means an adoption of the theological option expressed in Luther's *Letter to the German Nobility*.

The third step is to explore the possibility of retrieving patristic and apostolic testimony in favor of this differentiation. A further examination of the first step is unnecessary here insofar as what I have just said about the chapters can be easily verified by looking at the constitution *Lumen Gentium*. A detailed examination of the theological distinction between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood will require another essay. My focus will be on the third step. First one should look at patristic testimony; secondly, at the witness of the New Testament out of which, I am convinced, patristic ecclesiology is a legitimate doctrinal development.

But a word of caution must precede my examination of the testimony of New Testament and patristic ecclesiology. Jean-Marie Tillard has pointed out that

although it is acquainted with the term *kleros*, the first Christian literature is not aware of the opposition between clerics and laity. The *kleros* (part inherited, part chosen) designates the totality of Christians and among this totality, above all, the group destined for martyrdom. . . .

The New Testament, besides, is not aware of the term "laity," just as the Septuagint was not aware of it. The first appearance of this word in the *Letter of Clement* is an isolated case, even though it later played a key role.¹⁰

Tillard, basing his trust on Hippolytus's *Apostolic Tradition*, points to the beginning of the third century as the inception of the evolution which led to speaking about lay Christians or Christian clergy.

The one who will be designated as *cleric* is the one who is ordained for the liturgy (bishop, presbyter, deacon), more precisely the one who is ordained for this purpose, from the bishop, the official designation for worship (*cheirotonia*) which is effected through the imposition of hands (*cheirothesia*).

⁹ In order not to interpret 1 Peter 2:9–10 as describing the Church as an aggregate of priests, Tillard points out that the priesthood is "the primary important attribute of the community as such" (Tillard, *Church of Churches*, 170).

¹⁰ Tillard, *Church of Churches*, 211. See Clement of Rome, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, no. 40.

What is in question here is diaconia. Through ordination one enters into “the portion of the people of God” destined for its service, “a portion” whose honor consists of being of service for the *leitourgia*. Texts show that it remains evident again that it is the *entire* people gathered together who celebrate it. One was chosen for a role among this entire people, a role integrally contained within the dynamism of the community and inseparable from it. But soon, this “portion of the people of God” will be tempted to absorb or monopolize the functions necessary for the life of the community. There will be the *ordo* of clerics, including the entire clerical hierarchy, and the other group, the laity. This hardening of the frontier between clerics and laity will contribute to our losing sight of the fact that it is the entire people of God whom the Spirit calls to the service of the gospel and to take charge of its being faithful. It will lead to regrettable distortions in the ministerial function itself.¹¹

While Tillard’s reading counsels caution in reading the texts in search of testimony, it does not amount to blurring the distinction between the clergy and the laity. Instead, it offers a useful clarification as to how to consider the issue. The term “laity” might not have been found in the first Christian literature. Yet, it would be a case of the reality preceding the term. The entire People of God gathered to celebrate the liturgy, as described in Justin Martyr’s *First Apology*, and there has always been a portion of this People whose function was to be at the service of the People of God rendering its *leitourgia* to God. The existence and ministry of this “portion” preceded the testimony of the Church Fathers about to be cited here. The clergy was not the laity, and the laity was not the clergy. It is my contention that such existence and ministry represented an instance of diversity of ministry in the Church, a diversity willed by the Spirit and communicated in the *cheirothesia*.

Patristic Testimony of Diversity and Complementarity

Concerning patristic testimony, one can cite, among others, Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Cyprian of Carthage, Augustine of Hippo, to mention but these. In theirs, and in the writings of many other early Christians—which, in a way, enable us to feel the pulse of patristic ecclesiology—the distinction between the hierarchy and the plebs goes hand-in-hand with an appeal for harmony between the two.

Clement of Rome

Presupposed in Clement of Rome’s appeal for harmony within the Church in Corinth is a distinction between the clergy and plebs. “Let us reverence

¹¹ Ibid., 212.

the Lord Jesus, whose blood was shed for us. Let us respect those in authority, let us honor the presbyters.”¹² For Clement of Rome, therefore, the way to address the misgivings of the people toward their clergy was neither by erosion nor by usurpation of their authority. The solution he proposes would seem least attractive in an era of media-inspired perception of ecclesial life. But the challenge of contemporary Christians is to rediscover the wisdom in Clement’s words: “Let us put on unity of mind, thinking humble thoughts, exercising self-control, keeping ourselves far from all backbiting and slander, being righteous in deed, and not in word only.”¹³

Ignatius of Antioch

The words of Ignatius of Antioch’s letters on the way to martyrdom ought not to be overlooked in a discussion such as this. They not only point to the existence of a hierarchy, they call for communion between the hierarchy and the people. To the Trallians he wrote, speaking of the bishop as one who is in the place of Christ:

Your submission to your bishop, who is in the place of Jesus Christ, shows me that you are not living as men usually do but in the manner of Jesus Christ himself. . . . Thus one thing is necessary, and you already observe it, that you do nothing without your bishop; indeed, be subject to the clergy as well, seeing in them the apostles of Jesus Christ our hope, for if we live in him we shall be found in him. . . .

Similarly, all should respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, just as all should regard the bishop as the image of the Father, and the clergy as God’s senate and the college of the apostles. Without these three orders you cannot begin to speak of a Church. . . .

And so I strongly urge you, not I so much as the love of Jesus Christ, to be nourished exclusively on Christian fare, abstaining from the alien food that is heresy. And this you will do if you are neither arrogant nor cut off from God, from Jesus Christ, and from the bishop and the teachings of the apostles. Whoever is within the sanctuary is pure; but whoever is not is unclean. That is to say, whoever acts apart from the bishop and the clergy and the deacons is not pure in his conscience.¹⁴

To the Smyrneans he said: “Make sure that no step affecting the Church is ever taken by anyone without the bishop’s sanction. . . . Where the bishop is to be seen, there let all his people be; just as wherever Jesus Christ is present, we have the catholic Church.”¹⁵ To the Philadelphians he said:

¹² Clement of Rome, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, no. 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, no. 30.

¹⁴ Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Trallians*, nos. 2, 3, 6.

¹⁵ Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Smyrneans*, no. 8.

You are my abiding and unshakable joy, especially if your members remain united with the bishop and with his presbyters and deacons, all appointed in accordance with the mind of Christ who by his own will has strengthened them in the firmness which the Spirit gives.

I know that this bishop has obtained his ministry, which serves the community, neither by his own efforts, nor from men nor even out of vainglory, but from the love of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

As sons of the light of truth, flee divisions and evil doctrines; where your shepherd is, follow him as his flock. . . .

For all who belong to God and Jesus Christ are with the bishop; all who repent and return to the unity of the Church will also belong to God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ. Do not be deceived, my brothers. If anyone follows a schismatic, he will not obtain the inheritance of God's kingdom; if anyone lives by an alien teaching, he does not assent to the passion of the Lord.

Be careful, therefore, to take part only in the one Eucharist; for there is only one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup to unite us with his blood, one altar and one bishop with the presbyters and deacons, who are his fellow servants. Then, whatever you do, you will do according to God.¹⁶

Care must be taken not to read these words in a one-sided manner. For Ignatius does not just appeal for harmony with the bishop, he also points to the qualities of a good bishop. A good bishop imitates the gentleness of the living God.

I am deeply impressed by his gentleness, and by his silence, he is more effective than the empty talkers. He is in harmony with the commandments as is a lute with its strings. I call him blessed, then, for his sentiments toward God, since I know these to be virtuous and perfect, and for his stability and calm, in which he imitates the gentleness of the living God.¹⁷

And there is a more explicit statement from Ignatius on what is expected of clerics:

It is fitting also that the deacons, as being [the ministers] of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, should in every respect be pleasing to all. For they are not ministers of meat and drink, but servants of the Church of God. They are bound, therefore, to avoid all grounds of accusation [against them], as they would do fire.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Philadelphians*, nos. 1–4.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 1.

¹⁸ Ignatius, *Letter to Trallians*, no. 2.

Cyprian of Carthage

As for Cyprian of Carthage, even as his letters manifest the existence of a hierarchy in the Church of his time, he never ceased to make the point that communion with the hierarchy was essential for the life of the Church. Exhorting Maximus, Nicostratus, and other Roman confessors who had entered into schism, he pleaded for unity:

[I]t weighs me down and saddens me, and the intolerable grief of a smitten, almost prostrate, spirit seizes me, when I find that you there, contrary to ecclesiastical order, contrary to evangelical law, contrary to the unity of the Catholic institution, had consented that another bishop should be made. That is what is neither right nor allowable to be done; that another church should be set up; that Christ's members should be torn asunder; that the one mind and body of the Lord's flock should be lacerated by a divided emulation. I entreat that in you, at all events, that unlawful rending of our brotherhood may not continue; but remembering both your confession and the divine tradition, you may return to the Mother whence you have gone forth; whence you came to the glory of confession with the rejoicing of the same Mother. And think not that you are thus maintaining the gospel of Christ when you separate yourselves from the flock of Christ, and from his peace and concord; since it is more fitting for glorious and good soldiers to sit down within their own camp, and so placed within, to manage and provide for those things which are to be dealt with in common. For as our unanimity and concord ought by no means to be divided, and because we cannot forsake the Church and go outside her to come to you, we beg and entreat you with what exhortations we can, rather to return to the Church your Mother, and to our brotherhood. I bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell.¹⁹

When these confessors returned to ecclesial communion, Cyprian wrote a congratulatory letter to them explaining that while the imperfections of the Church might provoke and explain schism, they do not justify it.

For although there seem to be tares in the Church, yet neither our faith nor our charity ought to be hindered so that because we see that there are tares in the Church we ourselves should withdraw from the Church: we ought only to labor that we may be wheat, that when the wheat shall begin to be gathered into the Lord's barns, we may receive fruit for our labor and work. The apostle in his epistle says, "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor and some to dishonor." Let us strive, dearest brethren, and labor as much as we possibly can, that we may be vessels of gold or

¹⁹ Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter 43*.

silver. But to the Lord alone, it is granted to break the vessels of earth, to whom also is given the rod of iron. The servant cannot be greater than his lord, nor may anyone claim to himself what the Father has given to the Son alone, so as to think that he can take the fan for winnowing and purging the threshing floor, or can separate by human judgment all the tares from the wheat. That is a proud obstinacy and a sacrilegious presumption which a depraved madness assumes to itself. And while some are always assuming to themselves more dominion than meek justice demands, they perish from the Church; and while they insolently extol themselves, blinded by their own swelling, they lose the light of truth. For which reason we also, keeping moderation, and considering the Lord's balances, and thinking of the love and mercy of God the Father, have long and carefully pondered with ourselves, and have weighed what was to be done with due moderation.²⁰

For Cyprian, the Church's unity is never apart from the bishop. Consequently, he had this to say in his letter to Florentius Puppianus: "the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop. . . . If someone is not with the bishop, he is not in the Church."²¹ The same Cyprian never neglected the role of the laity in the governance of the Church.

I made a rule for myself, from the beginning of my episcopate, to decide nothing without the counsel [of the presbyters and deacons] and without the vote of the people, according to my personal opinion . . . not only with my colleagues but with all the people.²²

In other words, in the ecclesiology of Cyprian, episcopal authority was not to be exercised in a way that disregarded the fundamental dignity and equality of the baptized. The episcopate is not for the promotion of clericalism but at the service of the communion of charisms and ministries that that Church is.

Augustine of Hippo

The testimony of Clement, of Ignatius, and of Cyprian ought to be sufficient. But it would not be out of place to give the last word of patristic testimony to Augustine whose recognition of the sameness of dignity and

²⁰ Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 50.

²¹ Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 66. It is not a question of bishops living as monads but of bishops living in episcopal solidarity. Hence, Cyprian wrote: "There is among the bishops only one single Church, only one single soul and one single heart. . . . Through the institution by Christ, there is only one unique Church spread throughout the entire world in several members, one unique episcopate represented in a multitude of bishops united among themselves" (*ibid.*).

²² Cyprian of Carthage, *Letter* 14.

difference of roles among the baptized can be summarized in this brief but famous quotation:

I must distinguish carefully between two aspects of the role the Lord has given me, a role based on the Lord's greatness rather than on my own merit. The first aspect is that I am a Christian; the second, that I am a leader. I am a Christian for my own sake; the fact that I am a Christian is to my own advantage, but I am a leader for your own advantage.²³

The bishop of Hippo was not ignorant of the duties of a good bishop. "In addition to the fact that I am a Christian and must give God an account of my life, I as a leader must give him an account of my stewardship as well."²⁴

The Church Fathers referred to in this section of the essay show from their writings that the fact that the Church is a communion of members endowed with fundamental equality and dignity does not remove the diversity of ministries in the Church. Going by the testimony of the New Testament, such diversity, rather than negate communion, is itself rooted in and nourished by communion. In the midst of this diversity, to regulate it, is the gift of authority. This will now be considered.²⁵

New Testament Testimony Concerning the Gift of Authority in Ecclesial Communion²⁶

The place of the gift of authority in the Church of the New Testament enables us to grasp the New Testament testimony of the diversity and complementarity of charisms in the Church which underlies Pope John Paul II's vision of the lay faithful in the communion that the Church is. Using the intuitions of the Apostle Paul concerning the pneumatological *modus operandi* in the Church, and its application in the ecclesiology of Vatican II, Pope John Paul II, in the postsynodal exhortation *Christifideles Laici* wrote:

Ecclesial communion is more precisely likened to an "organic" communion, analogous to that of a living and functioning body. In fact, at one and the same time, it is characterized by a *diversity* and a *complementarity*

²³ Augustine, *Sermon* 46, 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ See the discussion of the distinction between the clergy and the laity in Tillard, *Church of Churches*, 211–23.

²⁶ An earlier version of this section of the essay was presented at a study session of the Nigerian Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission at the Jasper Akinola Centre, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, on July 21, 2004.

of vocations and states of life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities. Because of this diversity and complementarity, every member of the lay faithful is seen *in relation to the whole body* and offers a totally unique contribution on behalf of the whole body.

St. Paul insists in a particular way on the organic communion of the Mystical Body of Christ. We can hear his rich teaching echoed in the following synthesis from the council: “Jesus Christ”—we read in the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*—“by communicating his Spirit to his brothers and sisters, called together from all peoples, made them mystically into his own body. In that body, the life of Christ is communicated to those who believe. . . . As all the members of the human body, though they are many, form one body, so also are the Faithful in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:12). Also, in the building up of Christ’s body there is a diversity of members and functions. There is only one Spirit who, according to his own richness and the necessities of service, distributes his different gifts for the welfare of the Church (cf. 1 Cor 12:1–22). Among these gifts comes in the first place the grace given to the apostles to whose authority the Spirit himself subjects even those who are endowed with charisms (cf. 1 Cor 14).”²⁷

There are two points I would like to make here. First, the authority of Christ, which comes from God, has been given by Christ to his messengers in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, this authority, ordered by love and to love in *koinonia*, keeps the Church in communion with her apostolic origins. The Church is a pilgrim Church on her way to the *eschaton*. In her pilgrimage, she needs to remember her apostolic origins if she is to arrive at her eschatological goal. The Spirit, who reminds her of all things, uses the gift of authority to guide her on this pilgrimage. The Spirit is the memory of the Church through the gift of authority in her pilgrimage through history. The alternative would be a Church that goes off the right path, incapable of protecting the dignity of the baptized.

To speak of authority as a gift (*charisma*), as Pope John Paul II does following the Apostle Paul, is to speak of authority as a manifestation of the Spirit. This is the case because every gift is a manifestation of the Spirit. The following feature in what could be called the Pauline inventory of charisms (cf. 1 Cor 12:4–11): utterance expressing wisdom (*logos sophia*), utterance expressing knowledge (*logos gnoseos*), faith (*pistis*), healing (*iamatos*), working of miracles (*energumata dunameon*), prophecy (*propheteia*), discernment of spirits (*diakriseis pneumaton*), different tongues (*gene glosson*), interpretation of tongues (*hemencia glosson*).

²⁷ John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, no. 20, original emphasis; see also Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 7.

It would seem the gift of authority does not feature on this list. But, in fact, it does. Even though the word used here is not *exousia*, what Paul refers to as “discernment of spirits” (*diakriseis pneumaton*) indicates an essential function of authority. The ministry of authority in the New Testament Church is the regulation of charisms through discernment of spirits in order to ensure that ecclesial communion (*koinonia*) is preserved. The *koinonia* is the one body of Christ. That is where the analogy of the body that Paul uses comes in. For just as the different parts of the body keep the body together, the different gifts keep the one body of Christ together. “The particular manifestation of the Spirit granted to each one is to be used for the general good” (1 Cor 12:7). If it is granted that there is a reference to authority in the expression *diakriseis pneumaton*, which features on Paul’s list of charisms, then it can be said that in the indissociable ecclesiology and pneumatology of 1 Corinthians, authority features as a particular manifestation of the Spirit which regulates other particular manifestations of the Spirit. Authority is for the discernment of spirits. Therefore, one may further conclude, authority, like any of the gifts mentioned by Paul, has been given for the edification of the body of Christ. The edification of the body of Christ is in the attainment of the general good of the Church, and the general good of the Church is *koinonia*.

The word *koinonia* is somewhat loosely translated as “fellowship.” But it is by far richer in meaning. Its rich meaning is discovered when its succinct description in Acts 2:42, 4:32–35, and 5:12–16 is given due consideration. The nature of this *koinonia* involves more than gathering together to pray. It necessarily involves fidelity to the teaching of the apostles (*te didache ton apostolon*) and breaking of bread (*klasis tou artou*). The general good of the Church is found in the *koinonia* described in these words. That this is so is discernible in the way Paul orders every gift to love. Of all the gifts, he singles out faith, hope, and love, and of the three, he proclaims love as the greatest (cf. 1 Cor 13:13). It would seem therefore that, for Paul, authority regulates the charisms, and the charism of authority is itself regulated by love to which it is subordinated.

If the gift of authority is to be seen and received this way, that is, as itself regulated by love, then it must be seen as the authority of Christ himself. The one who has authority in the Church has it only because of Christ to whom the authority actually belongs. Rudolf Schnackenburg expresses this very well by way of a comparison with the concept and exercise of authority in Judaism:

The hierarchical direction of the primitive Church can in no case be mistaken for the Jewish hierarchy. In the latter after the end of the

Monarchy, the high priest occupied the summit as representing God's authority and under him the chief priests held the leading offices in the Temple; he was also president of the Sanhedrin which represented the assembly of the people as highest council and court of justice and in which, once again, the Scribes occupied a prominent position as professional interpreters of the Torah. In contrast to this, what is new in the Christian community is the absolute authority of Christ. For the primitive Church it is basic that Jesus as God's eschatological envoy authoritatively proclaims the will of God and that with his exaltation to the right hand of God, all power was conferred on him (Mt 28:18). Every exercise of office or service in the Church only takes place in virtue of the power (Mt 16:19; 18:18; Jn 21:15, 17) given to those he sent (Jn 20:21). For this there is no privilege of birth (as with the high priest), or of intellectual formation (as with the Scribes), but vocation, mission, and endowment with grace from on high are alone decisive. Christ "gives" his Church the various men who are entrusted with services, who work together in building up "his body" (Eph 4:11f). In contradistinction to the Jewish hierarchy, no one of himself has any claim to an office, and no suitability based on human qualities is decisive, but all qualification comes from God (2 Cor 3:5f). In the early Church this qualification is often produced by the Holy Spirit (extraordinary charismata) and sometimes made known by prophecy (cf. Acts 13:2; 1 Tim 1:18; 4:14); but even *with the imposition of hands* (cf. 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6) it is always conferred by the Holy Spirit (charismatic grace of office).²⁸

The *exousia* which comes from God belongs to Jesus. It is because his envoys continue his mission that they share in it.²⁹

Authority and Fidelity

Fidelity to the teaching of the apostles was and remains an essential feature of *koinonia* because of the privileged witnesses that the apostles were. The criterion put forward by Peter at the election of the replacement of Judas is indicative of the type of witness that apostles must be. The replacement was to be chosen "out of the men who have been with us the whole time that the Lord Jesus was living with us, from the time when John was baptizing until the day when he was taken up from us—one must be appointed to serve with us as a witness to his resurrection" (Acts 1:21–22). This of course raises the question of the apostolic credentials of Paul who was not one of those who accompanied Jesus during his earthly ministry. Here I note, as Tillard pointed out that "however secure

²⁸ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament* (London and Turnbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1974), 126–27, emphasis added.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 22–35.

his [Paul's] investiture is, the witness of anyone at all who has not 'accompanied' Jesus before the Cross (Acts 1:21–22) needs to find a confirmation in what the witnesses of the facts in question certify."³⁰ Paul himself refers to the tradition he received from those who were authoritative witnesses. One can make further reference to Tillard:

It is through the apostolic witness, conveyed through the power of the Spirit, that we know what happened to Jesus, what God accomplished in him, the words of the Lord himself which permit us to understand why. Salvation is then recognized as a gift not coming from a vague and abstract source but from the Father in and through Jesus Christ, faithful servant of the Good News of God. This relationship to the *acta et dicta* of Christ Jesus is essential. It is fundamentally for this reason that the Church is said to be founded on the apostles (Eph 2:20).³¹

The gift of authority has been given to the Church so that the Church may remain faithful to its apostolic origins. The role of authority is to ensure that what is presented as a manifestation of the Spirit conforms with the teaching of the apostles (*te didache ton apostolon*), which is essential to *koinonia*. It is helpful to recall one of the issues that occasioned the writing of the first letter to the Corinthians. The issue of charisms was paramount. Paul wrote to a Church that was charismatic but chaotic precisely because its members ignored the reason why they were given charisms: not for personal aggrandizement but for the good of the Church. The gift of authority was given to the Church to ensure the integral transmission and faithful transmission of the *didache ton apostolon* without which there is no communion. Authority is the minister of communion by being minister of apostolic teaching. The breakdown of authority in Corinth meant that there was no longer regulation of charisms through the discernment of spirits. Such breakdown ultimately leads to breaking of communion in a schism precisely because, in the absence of authoritative discernment, one can no longer guarantee the Church's fidelity to the teaching of the apostles. Where there is schism because there is no fidelity to apostolic teaching it is arguable if one can speak of a valid Eucharist, the sacramental manifestation of *koinonia*.

Conclusion

The charism of the lay faithful is not to erode authority in the Church, and the charism of authority is not to stifle the Spirit in the lay faithful.

³⁰ Tillard, *Church of Churches*, 176.

³¹ *Ibid.*

When, to warn the Church against a tendency that has been referred to as “clericalization” of the lay faithful, Pope John Paul II speaks of “a diversity and complementarity of vocations and states in life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities,” he has behind him the weight of conciliar, patristic, and apostolic authorities. These authorities point to the existence of diversity of charisms and ministries in the Church, the differentiation between the clergy and the lay faithful, and, one may say, ipso facto, the existence of the hierarchy. The Spirit, who is Principle of baptismal regeneration, confers on us the dignity of God’s children in the Son. One and the same Spirit is Giver of charisms, ministries, and roles in their diversity and hierarchy. The imagery of the vine and the branches points to the communion, the vital union that exists or ought to exist between the branches and the vine. And because the branches, though different, draw life from the same vine, there is no room for dichotomy or opposition between the lay faithful and the hierarchy in Catholic ecclesiology. The lay faithful and the hierarchy are not to be seen as opposition parties. Christ did not found the Church to be a dictatorship of clerics. Neither did he found the Church to be an ochlocracy of the laity. I believe John Cardinal Newman was proposing a midway between dictatorship and ochlocracy when he wrote about a *conspiratio pastorum ac fidelium* in his essay *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Christian Doctrine*.

Recognizing that the Holy Spirit, who is there to guide those who exercise authority in the Church, is the same Spirit given to all the members of Christ’s faithful in Baptism, the hierarchy and the lay faithful can breathe the same Spirit together, ministering the Spirit to each other. The challenge is to cooperate with the Spirit in order to have a leadership that listens in a community that prays. To respond to this challenge, competence, a forthrightness that does not betray confidentiality, a humility that respects the dignity and charisms of the lay faithful, and, of course, holiness must become prerequisites for leadership in the Church. Lack of such qualities in leaders is in itself a threat to ecclesial communion. Taking these qualities seriously in the formation of priests and in the selection of those to lead parishes and local churches will go a long way in helping to build a Church in which pastors are once again trusted by lay faithful who no longer rely exclusively on the secular media in shaping their perception of the Church.

The ecclesiology of communion at Vatican II comes to fore in the exhortation *Christifideles Laici*. Pope John Paul II’s description of the laity in the exhortation is in substantial concordance with Vatican II ecclesiology insofar as the lay faithful are to be seen within the *koinonia*. In the

final analysis, John Paul II and recent indices of friction and mistrust between the lay faithful and the hierarchy invite the Church to prayerfully reread the ecclesiology of Vatican II. In this ecclesiology, the affirmation of the dignity and vocation of the laity should never be misconstrued as abdication of pastoral responsibility by the hierarchy. Charisms do not negate but affirm one another. Pastors, theologians, and lay faithful will need to pray, hope, and work for the reception of the Church that the Spirit led Vatican II to give us—a Church in which the charism of pastors and the charism of the lay faithful affirm each other, because the hierarchy and the lay faithful affirm each other in whatever is good for the edification of the Church, a Church of intimate communion and active collaboration, not a Church of confusion of roles, sterile conflicts, and debilitating confrontation. As Tillard points out, the ordained, in the exercise of their ministry

are not called by their own *munus*, to be sufficient for it. Today as always—but undoubtedly more than before—their ministry can and must be accomplished only in the midst of a symphony of other ministries or services of the gospel. Such is the foundation on which one must always build. It is a question of entering into this dynamism of *communion* of functions.³²

I would add that it is for this reason that the dignity of those who exercise the ministry is in their service of communion, not in lording it over the people in the abuse of their clerical status. In this regard, one must not fail to recall the exhortation given to them in 1 Peter 5:1–4:

I urge the elders among you, as a fellow elder myself and as a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and as one who is to have a share in the glory that is to be revealed: give a shepherd's care to the flock of God that is entrusted to you: watch over it, not simply as a duty but gladly, as God wants; not for sordid money, but because you are eager to do it. Do not lord it over the group which is in your charge, but be example for the flock. When the chief shepherd appears, you will be given the unfading crown of glory.

The Church in our time needs to reconnect with the apostolic and patristic roots of Vatican II ecclesiology, which John Paul II's ecclesiology represents. The Church in the twenty-first century, like the Church at any period of her pilgrimage through history, must remain faithful to her apostolic origins so as not to undergo an eschatological distortion of her

³² Ibid., 219.

figure. To paraphrase Yves Congar, one of the theological motivators of the council, the apostolicity of the Church is not just in view of her origins but also in view of her goal. The Church to be presented to the Lord at the Parousia, even though she would have passed through all kinds of intellectual and cultural climatic conditions before the day on which his name will be written on the foreheads of those who have been regenerated in the waters of Baptism, ought not to be different from the Church he himself founded on the foundation of the apostles. **N-V**

“Worthy of the Temple”: Liturgical Music and Theological Faith*

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The Theological Life and Christian Liturgy

DURING THE COURSE of a calendar year, the Church unfolds in her liturgy the mysteries of Christ’s life. Her purpose in ordering the annual feasts centers on our sanctification. The liturgy nurtures the act of justifying belief that informs every active Christian. The believer enters into the whole mystery of salvation, which is distributed through the liturgical cycles of Christ’s life, death, and Resurrection. Christians begin this saving contemplation with the Incarnation, celebrating Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. Then they move through the Sundays of the year and of Lent, which introduces the Paschal Mystery: Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. After Trinity Sunday, the remainder of the calendar is given over to sustaining hope during Ordinary Time.¹ The worshiper encounters Christ by a special act of remembrance that occurs in faith, and which allows him to embrace not just the representation of a given

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¹ Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 102: “In the course of the year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from the Incarnation and Nativity to the Ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord.”

mystery, but also the One who embodies and communicates the grace that each mystery unfolds.²

It has become axiomatic that in the Church's liturgy, through perceptible, sacramental signs, Christ meets his Bride. These signs include words, actions, and even melodies, each of which, like the Incarnation itself, renders divine realities accessible to our human nature.³ We meet Christ in the sensible signs, for instance, of bread and wine, of flowing water, and in that uniquely personal sign that is the priest himself. What makes these signs effective agents of divine action? In a word, divine truth. In order to establish created signs as bona fide instruments of God's saving love, they must be informed with a proper enunciation of divine truth. Sacraments, according to received teaching, depend, that is, on both matter and form. As the Second Vatican Council emphasized, God's Word makes the signs effective. In the Catholic tradition, orthodox faith and authentic liturgy remain inseparable.⁴

The liturgy sustains the participated divine life that Christians properly denote the theological life, a life of faith, of hope, and of charity.⁵ Living faith is unique inasmuch as we hold fast through love to truths that escape our comprehension. The saints even speak of a heart of faith. The mystics recognize that this heart cries out for union.⁶ Liturgy creates a place for espousal, a venue to enact the union between God and man.

² Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 12, original emphasis: "The Church constantly draws her life from the redeeming sacrifice; she approaches it not only through faith-filled remembrance, but also through a real contact, since *this sacrifice is made present ever anew*, sacramentally perpetuated, in every community which offers it at the hands of the consecrated minister."

³ This important intuition is preserved in Aquinas's treatise on the sacraments where he reports a resemblance between the sacramental reality and the hypostatic union. See *Summa theologiae* III, q. 60, a. 6: "Primo enim possunt considerari ex parte causae sanctificantis, quae est Verbum incarnatum, cui sacramentum quodammodo conformatur in hoc quod rei sensibili verbum adhibetur, sicut in mysterio incarnationis carni sensibili est Verbum Dei unitum."

⁴ See for example, the Holy See's 2004 instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 6, which warns against liturgical abuses on the grounds that they mislead believers about the truth of Christ himself.

⁵ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2607 and 2803.

⁶ The French Carmelite, Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, relates the heart of faith to Christ's sacrifice: "At the foot of your Cross, beloved, Jesus, my crucified Love, I come to ask you again, Take my heart beyond return. Heavenly spouse, Savior divine, I give up all happiness, every union here on earth, to be yours alone. To give you love for love." See *Poem*, no. 69, in *J'ai trouvé Dieu: Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1980).

The theological virtues observe an order that reflects the processions of the Trinity. The Son, the Word, proceeds from the Father; and the Holy Spirit, the *persona amoris*, proceeds from them both. Likewise, the heart opens up in love only when it receives the Word in faith. Love follows truth. In the order of spiritual growth, as John the Divine instructs us, our minds are sanctified first by truth (see Jn 17:17). So also, in the Letter to the Romans, the Apostle exclaims: "Faith comes through what is heard."⁷ This Trinitarian order also informs divine worship. While the liturgy avails itself of biblical texts, the liturgical calendar develops around the articles of faith: Thus we have celebrations of the Trinity, Our Lord, Our Lady, the Communion of Saints, the Eucharist, and so forth. In the Church of Christ, truth begets and shapes love.

The Church holds that the movement from biblical revelation to creedal formulations occurs under the inspiration of the one Holy Spirit of God. This explains why the Church looks upon the profession of faith as a foundational document for her life.⁸ Since the Church receives the Creed as a principle instrument for her sanctification, she looks for ways to enhance and to prolong the believer's embrace of those truths that the Creed announces. She wants us not only to recite but also to ponder these truths. Sacred music affords one of the most effective means to accomplish this saving meditation. When it remains true to its theological character, sacred music enables the mind to contemplate what is being announced and celebrated in the Creed, namely, the mysteries of faith.⁹ The Church has always encouraged this singing of her truth, of her mysteries. They form the hymns of our redemption, and of the theological life that Christ's passion initiates.

French Initiative and Roman Calls for Renewal

In 1983, the former abbot of Solesmes, Dom Jean Prou, delivered an important discourse at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. This successor of Dom Prosper Guéranger reminded his United States audience of the proper place that music, especially Gregorian chant, enjoys

⁷ Rom 10:17. The Latin Vulgate of this verse inspired large portions of the Church's theology of faith: "Ergo fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi."

⁸ Even canonists recognize the place that the Creed holds in the Church's jurisprudence. For further information, see Francis G. Morrissey, OMI, *Papal and Curial Pronouncements: Their Canonical Significance in Light of the Code of Canon Law* (Ottawa: Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1995), 9ff.

⁹ Theology and contemplation spring from the same source and virtue, and shape complementary vocations in the Church: the theologian and the contemplative. No Christian, however, is exempt from engaging in both activities, although some obviously discover themselves more suited to developing one rather than another.

in the life of the Church. Music, he argued, meets a social need. Dom Prou observed that certain Christians are not destined to become members of the class that some title “intellectual.” Prolonged study is not their metier. Since, however, some education remains indispensable for sustaining the life of faith, he pointed out another kind of instruction that is able to inform a sustained life of contemplative faith. Although arguably conditioned by French cultural outlooks, his insight still merits our attention. Dom Prou locates this alternate form of study in the fine arts: “But the Church, in her motherly care, has always sought to meet the needs of all her sons without exception. . . . This fully explains why the arts are used in Christian worship.”¹⁰ He devotes the rest of his discourse to the place of the musical arts, which, he underscores, can afford a unique kind of catechesis: “In addition to catechetical instruction of an intellectual type, the Church has made a point of providing another catechism, of a lyrical nature, in order to embrace man in all his faculties, intellectual and sensitive.”¹¹ By his appeal for a lyrical catechesis, the abbot calls his audience to a new appreciation for the union of sense and sensibility. While all the arts serve the life of the Church, liturgical music, the Solesmes abbot opines, renders a unique contribution. As the well-known musical tradition of his monastery would suggest, Dom Prou privileges Gregorian chant. He also anticipates an emphasis recently underscored by Pope John Paul II.

In two recent allocutions, the Holy Father signals the importance of sacred music, and emphasizes the theological unity of sense and sensibility. He first affirms that “we must pray to God with theologically correct formulas and also in a beautiful and dignified way.”¹² Since sacred music touches the heart of faith, the Holy Father warns against an ugliness that is incompatible with inspired truth. His words suggest reform as much as they give encouragement. “The Christian community,” he exhorts, “must make an examination of conscience so that the beauty of music and hymnody will return once again to the liturgy.”¹³ One may infer that the pope expresses his displeasure with some contemporary enactments of the sacred rites. So he asks the Church to weigh the music that accompanies liturgical offices, and for each to ask the question: How does a given piece

¹⁰ Jean Prou, “Gregorian Chant in the Spirituality of the Church,” in *Gregorian Chant in Liturgy and Education: An International Symposium, June 19–22, 1983*, The Catholic University of America, Center for Ward Method Studies (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 28.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Pope John Paul II, “Music, Hymnody Should Be Worthy of the Greatness of the Liturgy,” Wednesday general audience (February 26, 2003), *L’Osservatore Romano* (English), March 5, 2003.

¹³ *Ibid.*

of music help the believer to embrace and ponder the mysteries of Christ? Those who have recognized the place that sacred music holds in both sanctifying the mind and forming the affect understand connaturally what is at stake in this papal exhortation. These men and women achieve the union of sense and sensibility that the Holy Father, in a later address, describes as essential for achieving excellence: “Only an artist immersed in the *sensus Ecclesiae* may try to perceive and translate into melody the truth of the Mystery that is celebrated in the liturgy.”¹⁴

The latepresent Holy Father’s appeal is not new. Pope John Paul II reprises a theme that has engaged the pontiffs of modern times. For instance, Pope St. Pius X supplied a foundational liturgical document for discussing the place of music in the Roman Rite when he issued in 1903 his *motu proprio* “*Tra le sollecitudini*.”¹⁵ At the beginning of the twentieth century, this Successor of Peter emphasized Gregorian chant and the special place that it holds in the Latin rite. He also mentioned two other musical forms: “classical polyphony,” which deserves, so he affirmed, to be used in more solemn offices precisely because it finds inspiration in Gregorian Chant, and “more modern music.”¹⁶ Modern music, Pius X however warned, requires a quality of composition that is both serious and dignified.¹⁷ He argued that “greater care must be taken, when admitting it, [so] that nothing profane be allowed, nothing that is reminiscent of theatrical pieces, nothing based as to its form on the style of secular compositions.”¹⁸ We may conclude that Pius X revealed himself fully aware of the modern penchant to separate sense and sensibility, truth from feeling.

For our present purposes, the 1903 *motu* merits special notice inasmuch as it underscores the relationship between liturgical music and the mysteries of Christ.

¹⁴ Pope John Paul II, “Chirograph for the Centenary of the *motu proprio Tra le sollecitudini*,” signed by the Holy Father on the feast of Saint Cecilia, patroness of music, November 22, 2003, and released December 3, 2003, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2003/documents/hf_jpii_let_20031203_musica-sacra_en.html.

¹⁵ *Tra le sollecitudini*, *motu proprio* (November 22, 1903, the feast of St. Cecilia), *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 36 (1903), 329–39.

¹⁶ It is important to note, however, that polyphonic music differs from chant insofar as the former combines several simultaneous voice parts of individual design, whereas the latter employs a single melodic line.

¹⁷ In *Tra le sollecitudini*, Pope Pius X sets down a golden rule: “The more closely a composition for the Church approaches in its movement, inspiration, and savor the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple” (no. 3).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 5.

Its chief duty is to clothe the liturgical text, which is presented to the understanding of the faithful, with suitable melody; its object is to make the text more efficacious, so that the faithful may through this means be the more roused to devotion and better disposed to gather to themselves the fruits of grace which come from the celebration of the sacred mysteries.¹⁹

We see in this excerpt the antecedents of the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on the Word of God in the liturgy. Or better, the perennial realization in the Church of the biblical given that "Faith comes through what is heard" (Rom 10:17). The Christian people exercise a theological synaesthesia; they hear the mysteries.²⁰ No wonder a century later, Pope John Paul II is asking the Church to make an examination of conscience concerning her liturgical music. He also wants the worshiper to embrace the mysteries in faith. He wants the liturgy to remain a place where saints can develop a heart of faith, where each of the faithful can meet the Bridegroom.

Note the diachronic unity: Pope Saint Pius X in 1903 and Pope John Paul II in 2003 announce the same truth: Sacred music is meant to glorify God and to sanctify the hearts and minds of the faithful. This common outlook on singing the mysteries unites us to the earliest days of Christian worship: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col 3:16). When the worshiper ponders God's love, shown forth preeminently in the mysteries of Jesus Christ, he experiences the "fruits of grace." Like the Eucharist, which is her source and summit, the Church's liturgy transforms us as we ponder the mysteries of our salvation. Each one of us is made ready to "meet" the Bridegroom (see Mt 25:6).

"The Delight of Melody with Doctrines"

Pope John Paul's 2003 exhortation on sacred music alerts us that bad musical usages have developed in certain liturgical contexts. While some

¹⁹ Ibid., no. 1.

²⁰ It is interesting to note that the first mention of "active participation" in the liturgy occurs in the context of urging the laity to learn to sing Gregorian chant. In the introduction to *Tua le sollicitudini*, the pope writes: "It being our ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit restored in every respect and be preserved by all the faithful, we deem it necessary to provide before everything else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple, in which the faithful assemble for the object of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and indispensable fount, which is the active participation in the holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church" (introduction).

texts fall short of expressing the Christian mysteries, many liturgical texts have been set to musical lines that distract from their sacred character. One may generalize and observe that contemporary liturgical music tends toward the anthropocentric. Bouncing meters, stirring tunes, pealing accompaniments, all conspire to push man toward the center of the liturgy. These musical expressions start us thinking about ourselves. This sort of musical “anthropological turn” ill serves a Catholic liturgy that is ordered to preparing the Bride for the Bridegroom. Indeed, the Second Vatican Council declared that One other than man holds the center place in the liturgy. He is Christ our High Priest.²¹ Others remain expectant, like brides. As long as the sacred liturgy is celebrated in the Church here below, the member of the Church may only receive from Christ the benefits that the liturgy promises.

Because it promotes the act of faith, Gregorian chant enjoys a certain pride of place in the Church’s worship.²² The chant provides a sacred rhythm that enables the worshiper to both ponder and contemplate the mysteries of Christ. The melodies that clothe the liturgy should persuade the believer to listen to what is proclaimed in the texts. It is easy to recognize, even when no words are involved, that music moves. Think of the soothing quality of Bach’s *Air from Suite No. 3 in D Major*. The sounds of strings and other instruments create an atmosphere of pastoral serenity. On the other hand, Jeremiah Clarke’s *Trumpet Voluntary*, or *The Prince of Denmark’s March*, accomplishes a majestic tone of triumph and enthusiasm. Music does speak for itself. If we abstract for a moment from the symmetry of words and music that the liturgy requires, we can observe that in the case of Gregorian chant, for example, the simple chant lines that clothe the texts create a spirit of recollection.

Gregorian chant fosters contemplation. There is something instinctually symbiotic between chant and doctrine. Chant endows the texts with sounds that promote our hearing them. St. Basil the Great (c. 330–79) captures this didactic dimension of sacred music, which he even ascribes to a deliberate act of the divine pedagogy:

²¹ See for instance, Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 83: “Jesus Christ, High Priest of the New and Eternal Covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile that hymn which is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven. He attaches to himself the entire community of mankind and has them join him in singing his divine song of praise.”

²² See what is stipulated in *ibid.*, no. 116: “The Church recognizes Gregorian chant as being specially suited to the Roman liturgy. Therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services.”

For when the Holy Spirit saw that mankind was ill-inclined toward virtue and that we were heedless of the righteous life because of our inclination to pleasure, what did he do? He blended the delight of melody with doctrines in order that through the pleasantness and softness of the sound, we might unawares receive what was useful in the words.²³

Basil recognizes the profound rift that sin introduces between sense and sensibility, and so he images God instituting for our salvation “the delight of melody with doctrines.” This Doctor of the East even goes so far as to conjecture that God uses sacred music to overcome our indisposition after original sin to listen to the truth. Music, he alleges, is therapeutic.²⁴

The tradition is unanimous in holding that sacred music develops a heart of faith. Music is ordered to open up the mind to the mysteries so that the heart can be moved to love the truth. Is it any wonder that a book of Josef Pieper is given the English title *Only the Lover Sings*? This twentieth-century German Catholic philosopher argues that music and silence are ordered to one another in a complementary way:

To the extent that it is more than mere entertainment of intoxicating rhythmic noise, music is alone in creating a particular kind of silence, though by no means soundlessly. . . . It makes a listening silence possible, but a silence that listens to more than simply sound and melody.²⁵

Pieper’s appeal for silence while listening is equivalent to recommending contemplation, even while singing.

Three Christian Festivals

In order to grasp how music assists the contemplation of the mysteries, we will examine the Gregorian melodies that the Church employs for three major feast days: Christmas, Easter, and Ascension. By way of contrast, we will also exhibit commonly used hymns in the English-speaking world for the same holy days. The realization of what we suggest here does not mean that the best of English hymnody, or other national melodies, should be excluded from liturgical planning, although the less noble elements of these compositions no longer would be required. Our suggestion would, at the same time, entail a retrieval of the spirit of Gregorian chant in new

²³ St. Basil, *Homily on the First Psalm*, PG XXIX: 209.

²⁴ In the same homily, St. Basil in fact mentions the practice of “wise physicians, who, when they give the more bitter draughts to the sick, often smear the rim of the cup with honey.” *Ibid.*

²⁵ Josef Pieper, *Only the Lover Sings*, trans. Lothar Krauth, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 55.

compositions. The descriptions of the musical designs that follow illustrate the way that chant fosters silence for hearing, whereas the modern compositions, which date from after the seventeenth century, seem to be governed by some other psychological principle.

Christmas

Dominus Dixit

Intr. 2.
D O-mi-nus * dī-xit ad me : Fī-li-us mé-us
 es tu, é-go hó-di-e gé-nu-i te.

In the introit for Christmas Midnight Mass, the Church sings: “Dominus dixit ad me: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te.” This simple arrangement in Mode II prepares the Church to welcome the birth of her Savior. We are caught up in the eternal generation of the Son: “The Lord said to me: You are my Son, today I have begotten you” (Ps 2:7). Written in an uncomplicated style, this introit belongs to the neumatic class of Gregorian chant.²⁶ Mode II, akin to the minor in modern music, creates a hushed environment.²⁷ This modality ranks among the most commonly employed modes within the entire body of Gregorian chants. In midnight darkness, the Church celebrates the mystery of God-made-man by turning us toward the hidden life of the Blessed Trinity.

At first look, the chant appears to suggest a playful movement between the interval Re–Fa. This ascending and descending design between the Final and the Dominant of the mode hints of a rocking motion. Visibly one can see this in the neumatic notation above the words “Dominus

²⁶ There are diverse styles of ornamentation throughout the *corpus* of Gregorian melodies. In addition to the neumatic style of chant, there exist also the syllabic and melismatic styles. The syllabic style represents those chants in which each syllable of the text usually receives one note of the melodic line. In the melismatic style the text is suspended while long lines of musical interpretation are devoted to single syllables, as occurs in the solemn alleluias sung at the Easter Vigil. The authors acknowledge the kind help of Edmund and Chalon Murray in writing this section of the paper.

²⁷ Unlike western music, which only uses two modes, the major and minor, the medieval system employs four pairs of modes. Each of the eight modes possesses a characteristic sound as well as short melodic patterns that identify the chants of that mode.

dixit ad me.” The musical language complements the text and elevates the words by shrouding them in a sort of lyrical silence that corresponds to the hushed mysteries of God. The combination of the mysterious minor mode and the simple motion through a limited set of pitches gives this chant a special place among other chant compositions. Something of genius is at work here. The reference pitch grounds the chant, giving it a sense of sobriety while the frequent movement of the ascending pitches fosters the expressive musical line. The chant draws the listener into an intimate mystery. In the silence of this night, Christ is born. The rocking movement through the musical line returns the Christian to the heart of the Trinity where the Father, as it were, lullabies his Eternal Son. The chant draws us into this *mysterium*, this divine secret, by allowing us to meditate serenely on the Incarnation. We find ourselves ready for the Mass at dawn when shepherds hasten to the place where Mary cradles her Son.

This introit, with its simple progression of notes, clearly evokes human sentiments different than what normally arise when we hear familiar Christmas carols. Take for example, “Angels We Have Heard on High,” a popular Christmas hymn that dates back to the eighteenth century.

Angels We Have Heard on High

French Traditional

An - gels we have heard on high Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 And the moun - tains in re - ply e - cho - ing their joy - ous strains
 Glo - - - - - ri - a
 in ex - cel - sis De - o, Glo - - - - -
 ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - - - - o.

Though nothing is recorded about the author of the text, we do know that this carol originates in *la belle France*. What we hear in this traditional French carol differs significantly from what the *Liber usualis* provides in Gregorian form for Christmas. Whereas the “Dominus dixit” leaves the listener to ponder the mystery of the Incarnation in silence and awe, “Angels” stirs in us a feeling of unmeasured exuberance, of heady cheeriness, and even of secular festivities. Written in the genre of the French “carole,” this musical construct finds its origins in medieval non-Christian customs. A “carole” refers to a closed circle dance associated with early pagan celebrations of the winter solstice. The musical language suggests lyrical expression, evidenced in the melodic line of the verses, whose simple chord progression and light movement sing of “joyous strains.”

The music seems to conform well to the text, especially in the “gloria” refrain at each verse. This refrain resembles the melismatic flourishes of complex chant, yet the metrical restrictions of the strophic hymn obliges singing to a set beat. The chant’s melodic design observes a flowing pulse. The metrical hymn, on the other hand, is bound to a steady tempo from phrase to phrase. The free rhythm inherent in the chant’s construct is not characteristic of metrical hymns. Like a well-performed waltz, meters are ordered to measured movement. Binary and ternary pulse units that govern the movement of chant introduce a different sense of time called free rhythm.²⁸ “Angels We Have Heard on High” sings of Christmas, but it more prompts wide-eyed toe-tapping than the serene listening that conduces to contemplation. This familiar carol may warm our hearts as we repeat the “glorias” of the angels. It, however, does not succeed as well to prepare our mind to ponder the saving truth about the eternal generation of the Son and his coming among us as a man. Sanctification is born of faith. The joy of the angels and shepherds becomes ours to the extent that our minds retain prayerfully the mystery of “Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.”

Easter

On Easter morning, we often hear trumpets blaring, organs pealing, and voices sounding in honor of the Lord’s Resurrection. Such an atmosphere stands far removed from that created by the introit for Easter Sunday morning. In the Gregorian, the music remains utterly calm and completely

²⁸ Justine Bayard Ward held the following view: “Rhythm is said to be ‘free’ when binary or ternary pulse units succeed each other randomly, freely alternating as in prose speech. In fact, most of the Gregorian chant repertoire is composed in free rhythm and can accurately be called ‘prose music.’” See the collection of her chant instructions in *Gregorian Chant Practicum*, ed. Theodore Marier (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990), 37.

restrained, without the loud flourishes commonly identified with popular Easter hymns.

Resurrexi

Intr. 

R Esur-réxi, * et adhuc técum sum, al- le-

 lú- ia : po- su- í-sti su- per me má- num tú- am,

 al- le- lú- ia : mi-rá- bi-lis fá-cta est sci- én-

 ti- a tú- a, alle- lú-ia, al- le- lú- ia.

Set in the plagal Mode IV, the long melody of “Resurrexi” moves with ease in a relatively restricted range. Its melodic design again suggests a musical sense of the modern minor key. This effect produces a reflective mood in that attention to the text takes priority. The chant is intoned below the Final of the mode’s scale. The musical line only reaches the Dominant in the second phrase of the chant over the third syllable of “po-su-i-sti,” drawing our attention to the divine at work in Christ’s Resurrection. The music punctuates the text as tone rises in pitch and intensity. The excitement of this line carries over into the third phrase, particularly in the neumatic formation over the word “tua,” where tune and text ascend to communicate the core of the Easter mystery. We celebrate the triumph of God’s hidden plan. In the simplicity of the chant, which one can visibly recognize in the music, the Paschal mystery is left to envelop the intellect. “Resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum, alleluia.” These are the first words the Church sings on Easter morning: “I have risen, and I am still with you, alleluia.” The text interprets what the bright angels announce on Easter morn to the women: “He is not here, but has risen” (Lk 24:6). The Mode IV, called hypophrygian, exudes the quiet serenity we assume enveloped those first witnesses of Christ’s Resurrection. The temper of modern Easter hymns, however, points in another direction, as “Jesus Christ Is Risen Today,” amply illustrates.

The popular hymn illustrated on the following page radiates the majestic tone that characterizes most Easter celebrations that one ordinarily encounters in parochial settings. The first stanza translates a fourteenth-

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

Je - sus Christ is ris'n to - day Al - - - le - lu - ia!

Our tri - um-phant ho - ly day Al - - - le - lu - ia!

Who did once up - on the cross, Al - - - le lu - ia!

Su - fer to re - deem our loss, Al - - - le - lu - ia!

century Latin hymn “Surrexit Christus hodie.” When paired with the musical line, this hymn sounds noble and joyful. The objective joy of Easter breaks forth in its strong isometric rhythm. The rhythmic structure of its four-four time signature, the “common meter,” resembles a stately march. “Jesus Christ Is Risen Today” leaves the listener in a mood of exuberance and excitement, whereas the “Resurrexi,” as we have observed, creates another sort of spiritual environment.

This eighteenth-century English hymn, which Charles Wesley (1707–1788) embellished with a doxology, is clearly ordered to warming hearts. It suits the revivalist enthusiasm that the Wesley brothers introduced into the Anglican church of their age. In the third strophe of the hymn a brief modulation to the Dominant produces an expansion in the melodic range. This expansion results in the range of a tenth above the tonic. It is interesting to note that most hymns restrict their range to an octave. The sheer thrill of this musical accompaniment speaks for itself. It rings of a royal fanfare announcing the joy of the Resurrection. The “alleluias” at the end of each strophe resemble the melismatic flourishes of the “glorias” in “Angels.” These vocal decorations supply added embellishments to the tune. The thunderous tone of this hymn resonates with much of the service music that fills churches on Easter morning.

The musical integrity of the hymn admittedly possesses its own merit. Within the context of the present investigation, however, we can recognize the significant departure from the tone set by the Gregorian melodies.

Easter joy is a gift of faith, as Christ himself taught the Apostle Thomas: “Blessed are those who have not seen and believed” (Jn 20:29). The Latin introit respects the mystery that Easter faith depends neither on vision nor sensible consolations. Absent these, the heart is free to ponder in faith the truth of Christ’s triumph over death, his Paschal mystery.

Ascension

Viri Galilaei

Intr.
7.

V I-ri Ga- li-lae- i, * quid admi-rá- mi- ni aspi-
ci- éntes in caé- lum? alle- lú- ia : quemádmó- dum vi- d-
stis é- um ascendéntem in caé- lum, i- ta vé- ni- et, alle-
lú- ia, alle- lú- ia, alle- lú- ia.

The introit for the feast of the Ascension is based on the text of Acts that is read during the Mass: “Men of Galilee, why are you looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven” (Acts 1:11). The victorious Savior ascends to heaven by his own divine power. The musical line of this Gregorian melody suggests an ascension of its own. Written in Mode VII, the chant uses pitch and intensity to achieve the impression of rising. The first two words of the chant “Viri galilaei” exemplify this movement. In a short span of time, the melodic line quickly ascends from the Final to the Dominant. This melodic line is characteristic of the central intervals of the Mixolydian mode. The authentic range movement from the Final, Sol, up to the Dominant, Re, respects the same melodic scale as the major. The rising of neumes in this Sol Mode sounds the same as the 1-3-5-note sequence of a major scale. The first incise demonstrates this movement and sets the festal tone for the rest of the chant. The intensity of the musical line is maintained throughout the musical phrase and is finally resolved in the cadence before the three alleluias. The soaring alleluias that make this chant highly expressive manifest the Church’s sober excitement at the Ascension of her Lord. The melismatic style attached to the “alleluias” adorns the chant with a musical meditation of joy. The

beauty and dignity of this Gregorian melody supplies an effective medium for contemplating the tranquil anticipation that Christ's Ascension produced in his disciples. A different atmosphere however emerges in the commonly sung "Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise."

Hail The Day That Sees Him Rise

Wesley

Hail the day that sees him rise Al - - - le - lu - ia!

To his throne a - bove the skies, Al - - - le - lu - ia!

Christ, a - while to mor - tals giv'n, Al - - - le - lu - ia!

Re - as - cends his na - tive heav'n. Al - - - le lu - ia!

The Welsh hymn tune *Llanfair* was written by Robert Williams (1781–1821) who named it after his parish church in Anglesey.²⁹ This Ascensiontide hymn tune also occurs commonly throughout the Easter season. Its simple AABA structure is typical of nineteenth-century Welsh tunes. It makes the hymn accessible to congregational singing. So it is not surprising that Charles Wesley included it in the approximately six thousand hymns that he collected for his evangelical revival movement. The lyrical nature of the tune and the recurring “alleluias” create, without being overstated, a dazzling sense of grandeur. The tune infuses the text with themes of triumphal ascent and eager hope in the One who, as the original text puts it, “re-ascends his native heaven.” Text and tune create an atmosphere of majestic awe. The stately meter and colorful lines create a musical texture that bespeaks of a joyous celebration. Whereas this stately hymn achieves excitement and delight, its Gregorian equivalent

²⁹ The name of the Anglesey Church provides one of the longest words in any known language: *Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch*. A recognized translation runs: “Church of St Mary in the hollow of white hazel near the rapid whirlpool of the Church of St Tysilio by the red cave.”

conduces toward a tranquil spirit of contemplation in which the worshiper can ponder the mystery of a world where, in the absence of the visible Lord, all are left to meet Christ in the sacraments. Although these sign-actions are expressive of what they cause, only the one who beholds them in the darkness of faith receives an uplifted heart.

Because it cultivates faith-filled reflection on the mysteries of Christ, Gregorian chant ensures the spiritual nourishment of worshipers. No wonder popes have signaled their preference for this ancient musical form. During the period after the Second Vatican Council, chant suffered eclipse in most liturgical settings. Many people no longer considered Gregorian chant a feasible option for the renewed liturgy. Today, there is reason to question this decision. However some persons effectively resisted the postconciliar marginalization of chant. These church musicians preserved the ancient Gregorian chants and, at the same time, created new forms of liturgical music that complement the traditional repertoire. The present authors would like to acknowledge especially the contributions of the Boston Church musician, Theodore Marier (1912–2001), whose heritage and accomplishments are carried on by the Boston Archdiocesan Choir School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This essay, however, also honors the efforts of all those Church musicians who have worked to demonstrate how Gregorian chant influences for the better contemporary liturgical compositions. These artists have realized the axiom of Pope Saint Pius X: “The more closely a composition for Church approaches in its movement, inspiration, and savor the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it is.”³⁰ N V

³⁰ *Tra le sollecitudini*, no. 3. Special thanks to Leo Abbott of Boston for having read a draft of this essay.

Is the Moral Species of Craniotomy a Direct Killing or a Saving of Life?*

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Introduction

IN A VERY ASTUTE article for *The Thomist*, Germain Grisez, John Finnis, and Joseph Boyle Jr., wrote a clear and precise study on the morality of craniotomy, arguing that it is not always wrong when the immediate intention is not to kill the fetus.¹ In essence they hold that while killing innocent people is always wrong, the act of craniotomy is not wrong because the moral species of the act is that of saving the mother's life by reshaping the head of the fetus that is too large to leave the mother's womb and where a caesarian operation is not feasible. Describing what goes into the operation does not go to the heart of the moral act, but the immediate intention does.

Two years later, *The Thomist* published three essays under the title "Aquinas on the Object of the Moral Act" by three authors—Steven Long, Tobias Hoffman, and Kevin Flannery, SJ.² Long and Hoffman attempt to answer some of the arguments of the Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle

* I wish to thank several Dominicans, John Finnis, and Kevin Flannery, SJ, for their criticisms of previous drafts of this article. Also, special thanks to Germain Grisez for all the personal help given to me over the years.

¹ Germain Grisez, John Finnis, and Joseph Boyle, Jr., "Direct and Indirect," *Thomist* 65 (2001): 1–44.

² Steven Long, "A Brief Disquisition Regarding the Nature of the Object of the Moral Act According to St. Thomas Aquinas," *Thomist* 67 (2003): 45–71; Tobias Hoffman, "Moral Action in a Human Action: End and Object in Aquinas in Comparison with Abelard, Lombard, Albert and Duns Scotus," *Thomist* 67 (2003): 73–94; Kevin L. Flannery, SJ, "The Multifarious Moral Object of Thomas Aquinas," *Thomist* 67 (2003): 95–118.

article and Flannery's article only obliquely. I hope to show by a partial variation of the Long article that the Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle analysis of this question (not their criticism of Jean Porter contained therein) is flawed based upon the nature of the causality involved as well as the consequences of using their method when applied to other bioethical problems. As will be shown, when the Church's teaching uses the phrases "direct" and "indirect," part of the nub of the question, these phrases have to do with the nature of causality and the specific difference between a substantial and an accidental change. These realities have to be taken into account, as well as the immediate intention of the acting person, when deciding the morality of craniotomy.

The Past Teaching of the Church on Craniotomy

When Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle refer to Leo XIII, they correctly interpret him to mean that craniotomy cannot be safely taught or done because the Holy Office itself, in accordance with the pope's approval, asserted that not only can the practice not be *safely taught*, it cannot be *done*.³ This was in response to a request for clarification by a physician who had been killing fetuses in the womb in order to save the life of the mothers. Hence the Church's teaching was not a matter of disciplinary teaching:⁴

[From the reply of the Holy Office to the archbishop of Cambresis, July 24, 25, 1895]

1890a When the doctor, Titius, was called to a pregnant woman who was seriously sick, he gradually realized that the cause of the deadly sickness was nothing else than pregnancy, that is, the presence of the fetus in the womb. Therefore, to save the mother from certain and imminent death, one way presented itself to him, that of procuring an abortion, or ejection of the fetus. In the customary manner, he adopted this way, but the means and operations applied did not tend to the killing of the fetus in the mother's womb, but only to its being brought forth to light alive, if it could possibly be done, although it would die soon, inasmuch as it was not mature.

Yet, despite what the Holy See wrote on August 19th 1889, in answer to the Archbishop of Cambresis, that it could not be taught safely that any operation causing the death of the fetus *directly*, even if this were necessary to save the mother, was licit, *the doubting Titius clung*

³ Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle, "Direct and Indirect," 21 note 33, and providing, on 26–27, an interpretation that seems to be plausible.

⁴ Cf. Denzinger, nos. 1885–88. *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, in Henry Denzinger, ed., *Enchiridion symbolorum*, 30th ed. (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), 473–74.

to the licitness of surgical operations by which he not rarely procured the abortion, and thus saved pregnant women who were seriously sick.

Therefore, to put his conscience at rest Titius suppliantly asks: Whether he can safely repeat the above mentioned operations under the recurring circumstances. (emphasis added)

The reply is:

In the negative, according to other decrees, namely, of the 28th day of May, 1884, and of 19th day of August, 1889.

But on the following Thursday, on the 25th day of July . . . our most holy Lord (Pope Leo XIII) approved the resolution of the Most Eminent Fathers, as reported to him.⁵

The Proposed Defense of Fetal Craniotomy as a Moral Good

The clinical rationale for performing a fetal craniotomy occurs when a fetus's head is so large that it cannot pass through the birth canal without killing the mother; the skull, therefore will be crushed. Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle argue that such a procedure is morally permissible because it is not an intended killing but the saving of the mother's life; the doctor's object, the "what" or scope of the act, is only to re-shape the baby's skull so that it can be withdrawn from the mother. Granted that the baby will undoubtedly die, as an unwanted side-effect, such is not the immediate intention specifying the action; rather, it is an unintended result that is not a direct means of saving the mother's life. Moreover, this external act is merely a reshaping of the fetus's skull to facilitate its delivery or expulsion from the womb of the mother. If the skull were not crushed in this process, so much the better as is the case with caesarian sections that normally bring forth into the world living babies. Despite the actual but unintended harm to the fetus, the preservation of the mother's life is an intended end that influences the moral object of the act. Thus Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle conclude that the fetal craniotomy is permissible when the intention is not to kill.

An Intuition?

If the first right is that to respect human life, then any act that violates this right, especially in the case of the killing of an innocent, would seem prohibited independent of the immediate intention behind it. Yet, as St. Thomas Aquinas teaches concerning self-defense, "if a man engages in legitimate activities and uses due care, he is not guilty of any homicide that may ensue" (*ST II-II*, q. 64, a. 8). In light of the principle of double

⁵ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

effect, this possibility extends to the case of bombing a munitions factory in a hostile nation as a means of preserving the lives of a nation's own soldiers and winning the war, even though doing so may bring about the regrettable and undesired result of killing innocent civilians, since self-defense in just war is morally good.⁶ Likewise, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, numbers 2263 and 2264, teaches that the killing of enemy soldiers in a just war must be a side-effect of the intention of defending one's country, a view defended by Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle in their work *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality, and Realism*.⁷

Though it is much more than *merely possible* that an unborn child will die as the unintended result of a fetal craniotomy, craniotomy is not an abortion or the deliberate termination of a human life according to the analysis of Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle. If they had quoted the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, they could have added that craniotomy with the correct intention is not wrong "either as a means or an end." This has to be so because the doctor's immediate intention is not to kill the fetus but only to reshape the skull, a procedure that intends to save the mother's life but not the child's, which it cannot.

One objection to their interesting theory should be this: If crushing the skull is only reshaping it, what is its new form? In fact there are now many forms giving existence to many body parts. Mere body parts cannot be actuated by a new form. From this observation, one has to conclude that a substantial change has occurred, not an accidental one. What and who caused it needs to be remembered in making any moral evaluation.

Further, the moral proportionality of this act of reshaping eludes the analysis of Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle because they only focus on how this act does not deliberately intend the infant's death. I grant that the child's death may be outside the doctor's intention. However, because such an outcome is a foreseeable result of this procedure, of its very nature always and everywhere, the analysis of immediate intentionality by Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle seems to be too narrow in scope to conclude to a differing moral species of this procedure other than Leo XIII's.⁸ The

⁶ See Francisco de Vitoria, *Political Writings*, ed. Anthony Pagden and Jeremy Lawrance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 315.

⁷ Germain Grisez, John Finnis, and Joseph Boyle, Jr., *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality, and Realism* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 315–16, n. 3.

⁸ I believe that Rhonheimer is correct when he warns moralists that an immediate intention can be a disguise of a hidden goal of using the false principle that the end justifies the means. See his work *Natural Law And Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 464.

intended immediate end alone of an action is not always a sufficient basis of moral assessment of all human acts. The theologian must also consider the very nature of the means by which it is pursued.

Several years ago in his message for World Day of the Sick, John Paul II reminded all theologians of the following principle:

It is never licit to kill one human being in order to save another. And when palliative treatment in the final stage of life can be encouraged avoiding a “trial at all costs” mentality, it will never be permissible to resort to actions of omission which *by their nature* or in the intention of the person acting are designed to bring about death.⁹

At the conclusion of a meeting held at the Augustinianum, the Holy Father likewise noted the following (4e):

In this regard, I recall what I wrote in the encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, making it clear that “by euthanasia in the true and proper sense must be understood an action or omission which *by its very nature* and intention brings about death with the purpose of eliminating all pain”; such an act is always “a serious violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person.”¹⁰

Recently in an article for *America* magazine, Grisez himself pointed out the following concerning the evil of abortion:

However, choosing to support abortion funding also has a *built-in intention*. Whoever engages and pays someone to do something intends that it be done. Thus, when Mr. M’s wife, girlfriend, secretary . . . tells him that she is pregnant with his child and he offers to take her to an abortionist and pay for the abortion, Mr. M intends that the woman get an abortion. If she took his money and used it to buy diapers and a crib for the baby she meant to have, keep, and raise—in part with the help of Mr. M’s regular child support payments—his intention in providing the funds would be frustrated.¹¹

⁹ Catholic World News, “Pope’s Message for World Day of the Sick,” February 7, 2003, emphasis added, <http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewrec.cfm?RefNum=19883>.

¹⁰ John Paul II, “Persons in Vegetative State Deserve Proper Care,” address of John Paul II to the participants in the International Congress on “Life-Sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State: Scientific Advances and Ethical Dilemmas,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English), March 30, 2004, quoting *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 65, emphasis added.

¹¹ Germain Grisez, “Catholic Politicians and Abortion Funding,” *America Magazine* 191 (2004): 5, emphasis added.

I hope to show that it would also follow that craniotomy of its very nature has a built-in intention against human life and, therefore, cannot be used to save the life of a mother.

Not Merely a Question of Unsafe Teaching

Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle are not ignoring this teaching of Leo XIII; indeed they mention it on pages 26 to 29 of their article. Their analysis of the question concerns the philosophical perspective from which they question its validity. While the word “craniotomy” does not appear in the official document of Leo XIII, the Holy Office in principle means precisely craniotomy. This is a theological teaching of the Church that has never changed up to this present.

Some decades later, Pope Pius XI would also speak out against craniotomy, also without using the word, by saying that the fetus cannot at all be assessed as in any way similar to an unjust aggressor:

As for the “medical and therapeutic indication,” We have already said, Venerable Brethren, how deeply we feel for the mother whose fulfillment of her natural duty involves her in grave danger to health and even to life itself. But can any reason ever avail to excuse the direct killing of the innocent? For this is what is at stake. The infliction of death whether upon mother or upon child is against the commandment of God and the voice of nature: “Thou shalt not kill!” The lives of both are equally sacred and no one, not even public authority, can ever have the right to destroy them. It is absurd to invoke against innocent human beings the right of the state to inflict capital punishment for this is valid only against the guilty. *Nor is there any question here of the right of self-defense, even to the shedding of blood, against an unjust assailant, for none could describe as an unjust assailant an innocent child. Nor, finally, does there exist any so-called right of extreme necessity which could extend to the direct killing of an innocent human being. Honorable and skillful doctors are therefore worthy of all praise when they make every effort to protect and preserve the life of both mother and child.* On the contrary, those who encompass the death of the one or the other, whether on the plea of medical treatment or from a motive of misguided compassion, act in a manner unworthy of the high repute of the medical profession.¹²

Nevertheless, Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle stake their claim on a more sophisticated understanding of what it means to will an act in a way that includes something beside the intention in itself. Indeed they proceed by

¹² Pius XI, *Casti connubii*, in *The Human Body*, ed. the Monks of Solesmes (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1960), 31, emphasis added.

drawing on the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas.¹³ Since their approach seeks to evolve the papal teaching on craniotomy from a philosophical perspective, it could open the door to other medical procedures that will raise other ethical issues, such as the premature termination of other unhealthy pregnancies, which are understood to be proscribed by most theologians.¹⁴ On the other hand, if the doctor's intention is to simply perform a therapeutic act other than crushing a living fetus's skull with the proper intention of healing the fetus and saving the mother's life, then its untimely death properly would be a side effect of an accidental cause.

*Homicide as a Genus Is Not Morally
Indifferent, Simply Speaking*

To identify the specific object of moral acts, it is often essential to abstract from the agent's immediate intention and remote intention(s). To be sure, some acts considered in themselves are morally indifferent such as scratching one's head or picking flowers randomly. However, in the case of the death of a human person, moral issues are not neutral. For example, in his *Questiones quodlibetales* 9, 7, 2 (15), Aquinas writes:

There are some actions which, absolutely considered, involve a definite deformity or disorder, but which are made right by reason of particular circumstances, as the killing of a man . . . involves a *disorder in itself*, but, if it be added that the man is an evildoer killed for the sake of justice . . . it is not sinful, rather it is virtuous.¹⁵

It is unusual for St. Thomas to speak of an action in the abstract as a "disorder" without it being a sin. This is particularly true when such elements as the immediate intention, circumstances, and motives dictate otherwise. Significantly, human killing is of sufficient importance to show the need for considering such factors. For example, today, if St. Thomas were responding to the Magisterium's current teaching on capital punishment,

¹³ See Joseph M. Boyle Jr., "Double-Effect and a Certain Type of Embryotomy," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 44 (1977): 303–18.

¹⁴ See Thomas J. O'Donnell, SJ, *Medicine and Christian Morality*, 3rd ed. (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1996), 183–92, especially 186. This can also be a problem with several articles by Edward Krasevac, OP, "Two Unresolved Issues for the Third Millennium," *New Blackfriars* 82 (2001): 177–81; and idem, "The Good We Intend and the Evil that We Do: A New Look at *Praeter Intentionem* in Aquinas," *Angelicum* 79 (2002): 839–54.

¹⁵ Quoted in Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, vol. 1, *General Moral Principles* (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), 149, emphasis added. The translation was done by Richard McCormick, and Grisez goes on to state that "supervening circumstances can totally empty out the disorder."

whereby “an evildoer is killed for the sake of justice,” he perhaps could revise it along the following lines and say: “Capital punishment *may* be virtuous or right under certain unusual circumstances,” and then he might outline one or some of those special circumstances. The teaching of the revised *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, number 2267, which leaves only a small window open for this possibility, clearly addresses this issue:

Assuming that the guilty party’s identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church *does not exclude* recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor. . . .

If, however, non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people’s safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity with the dignity of the human person. (emphasis added)

These passages arguably may or may not influence governments to withhold or abolish criminal execution in many jurisdictions. Nevertheless what St. Thomas saw as morally justifiable killing is now deeply modified because of conceptual advances of theologians and the papal Magisterium itself reflecting upon the gospel of life.

However, as Aquinas notes in other contexts, some acts admit the permitting of a human person’s death and may not be morally disordered when the effect is either a proportionate or side-effect of the action itself. Thus the killing of someone that is not intended as self-defense but is purely unintentional or accidental would not be morally evil per se (*ST* II-II, q. 62, a. 3). However, such a killing could be morally evil by neglecting to use proportionate means even though a defensive act.

The Necessity of Distinguishing Efficient Causality from Occasional Causality

If we begin with an example from the life of Christ, one could argue that his preaching and teaching caused Judas’s betrayal and eventual suicide, but even more remotely, caused the Crusades, and even further, the destruction of the World Trade Center. However Christ’s death is not really understood to lead to any of these actions per se. Instead they were caused by other more immediate acts by others. In other words, Christ’s first coming may be construed as the occasion of these horrible deeds but not as their immediate or per se cause. So, Judas killed himself, Christ did not kill him. Some crusades came about from some erroneous ideas related to Christ but not flowing per se from Christ’s human/divine acts.

Moreover, the Tradition sees that the devil is an occasional cause of individual sins, but not their efficient cause. Human beings are rightly understood to be directly responsible for their human acts but the devil in some way, *per accidens*, is sometimes responsible by his influence when freely consented to. Occasional causes do not bring about their effects, simply speaking, but serve as circumstances by which some other agent or force actually brings about a particular effect. If occasional causes are human beings attempting to influence other human persons, they may share in the merits of the receptor's virtuous deeds or they may be morally accountable for the evil done depending upon their intentions and motives.

So, likewise, when examining medical procedures, the theologian must distinguish *per se* causes from *per accidens* causes. He can do so by careful observation and analysis of external acts. The doctor legitimately removes a cancerous uterus, which, in turn, may lead to the death of a fetus as an unintended effect. Let us suppose that this in turn induces a depression in the mother that is so acute that it leads the woman to kill her other children. The doctor was the efficient cause of removing the cancerous womb. However, the doctor did not *per se* cause the abortion syndrome of the woman nor the death of the mother's children if she went into a rage afterward and murdered them. Going backward from all the effects to the cause, only the removal of the uterus was directly and efficiently attributable the doctor, but not the other deleterious effects.

To take the Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle case, the doctor "redesigns" an infant's skull by crushing it. This permits him to remove parts of the fetus through the birth canal and save the life of the mother. From observation and analysis of this action, not a mere description, the doctor acts not as an occasional or *per accidens* cause in a string of events but as a *per se* necessary and direct cause. This is known because it is in the teleology of smashing skulls (the end *of itself*) that the procedure of its nature directly and immediately kills an innocent fetus. If the skull could be compressed in such a way that the fetus's life would not be lost, then the doctor would not be directly and physically killing the fetus. In other words, it is reasonable to hold that there is a direct and immediate link between crushing a skull and the death of the fetus, no matter what a doctor immediately or personally intends. Here it is noted that the doctor directly causes or initiates a substantial change. Of course, if the fetus is already dead, crushing its skull does not cause the substantial change by killing it (though for Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle, skull crushing in both cases seems to be the same act physically).¹⁶ In the latter case, the surgeon

¹⁶ Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle, "Direct and Indirect," 25.

causes an accidental change by removing dead body parts from the womb. As is clear for Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle, intending some other effect and crushing the skull of a living human being is not killing because it is not an intended death-dealing action. However, this assertion goes counter to a realistic observation of and reflection on the facts of what is done regardless of intentions. But, to employ Thomistic moral terminology, the morally upright death of craniotomy should merely be the outcome of an occasional not an efficient cause contra John Finnis.¹⁷

The Importance of the Terminology: Direct and Indirect

One should also ask if a theological discussion can allow itself to void the distinction between “direct” and “indirect.”¹⁸ How can one simply overlook *Declaration on Procured Abortion* (no. 14), the instructions of *Evangelium vitae* (nos. 58b and 72), or the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which uses the terminology *direct* (nos. 2268, 2269, 2271, 2277, and 2291) and *indirect* (nos. 2269, 2281, and 2412)? For one example, when it comes to “direct” killing, this distinction is found in *Evangelium Vitae*, number 57:

Therefore, by the authority which Christ conferred upon Peter and his successors, and in communion with the bishops of the Catholic Church, I confirm that the *direct and voluntary* killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral. This doctrine, based upon that unwritten law which man, in the light of reason, finds in his own heart (cf. Rom 2:14–15), is reaffirmed by Sacred Scripture, transmitted by the Tradition of the Church and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium. (emphasis added)

According to Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle’s theory of voluntary action, the act of craniotomy would not be either direct or voluntary because it is done with a different moral object in mind and chosen by the will, and therefore the ensuing death of the baby is only a side effect. I claim that this act of violence, in this case, treads on the inviolable dignity and sanctity of human life because the direct action of its nature, apart from intentionality, efficiently causes a substantial change, the separation of soul from the body, and so, is not a mere side effect. If someone were to light a fuse attached to dynamite to see if it is in working order and not intending that it go off, he would be guilty of grave negligence in his own death from

¹⁷ See John Finnis, *Thomist* 55 (1991): 10–24, where he argues that the doctor’s emptying out the oversized head of the baby is an object of *choice* (*genere moris*) but is not a *cause*.

¹⁸ Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle, “Direct and Indirect,” 1; see also St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 76, a. 1; q. 80, a. 4, among many other texts.

the nature of things. Similarly there is a distinction between giving a drug to kill someone as in euthanasia, and a drug to sedate so that machines can be turned off in order that the patient whose death is naturally immanent will not die in grave pain. In the first case, the drug is directly killing (efficient cause) someone with my consent (formal cooperation); in the second case, the disease process is the killer, and the medications are making it easier for a patient to endure or even eliminate all pain.

Long-Term Effects of Instruments of Violence and Their Varying Moral Objects

Similarly, one can suppose that somewhere in Germany's Black Forest a child steps on a landmine, which instantly kills him. Who is responsible for this act? Everyone knows what caused his death, but identifying the responsible party is another matter. Whether the landmine was placed by a member of the German army or by the Allies may not be ascertainable, but it seems fair to say that it was placed for military purposes, for example, to blow up enemy vehicles or troops. It can be allowed further that after the war both sides earnestly tried to remove all the landmines they placed; however, because of the tumult and chaos following the war, they were unable to be completely successful. If this were so, then we may conclude that because no one is directly responsible, the child's death is the accidental result; it is an *indirectly* caused death by those who laid down the mines. This unfortunate accident is remotely caused by whoever placed the landmines and, less remotely, by those who did their best in a non-negligent manner but, by accident, failed to clear the roads of all of them. These actions were done without the intention of harming any innocent child who happened to become a victim after the hostilities ended.

Difficulties in Formulating Moral Objects

Some years ago, Martin Rhonheimer wrote of moral acts that their "*debita proportio, convenientia* or *debita materia* must be ordered by reason in acts that have already been thoroughly analyzed."¹⁹ Contraception provides one example. The papal Magisterium teaches that the sin of contraception occurs in the particular context of two people who freely attempt to engage in sexual intercourse in which either party renders infecund the act itself either physically or chemically.²⁰ Though one may

¹⁹ Rhonheimer, *Natural Law*, 422.

²⁰ Cf. *Humanae Vitae*, no. 12. See Pontifical Council for the Family, *Vademecum for Confessors*, no. 13, which speaks of a special kind of material cooperation in the evil of contraception.

wish to argue that such an act is intended to promote family life, the couple are still freely and deliberately seeking to avoid the possibility of children, one of the goods of marriage, with a contralife will²¹ by using a physical, violent²² means that attacks the goodness of the act.²³

Willed Immediate Intentions Where the Act Is Proscribed

Without doubt to this writer, a deliberate crushing of the child's skull violates the physician's *raison d'être*. There is no possibility that the skull can be reshaped and the child returned to life. Though this effect may be beside the doctor's immediate intention, the result directly flows from the doctor's causal action. His immediate intention, in this instance, seems to become a subjective rationalization to save the life of the mother. It would be similar to the issue of separating Siamese twins. Supposing one twin possessed the lungs and the other possessed the heart. Separating them would kill them both since human beings cannot live without a heart or lungs. Right intentions in this circumstance would not change the murderous action, objectively speaking.

The Medical Use of Violence

Physical, chemical, or biological violence to another human person is rarely permissible, and only after due consideration has been carefully rendered with respect to the relevant circumstances. But experience and medical analysis may show that, for the most part, the wounds or pain inflicted by a well-designed operation or chemical intervention will eventually subside and heal. The patient will feel better physically and psychologically, if such are done under the care of a skilled physician, all things prudently considered. But mistakes in practical judgments can and

²¹ Cf. Germain Grisez et al., "Every Marital Act Ought To Be Open to New Life," *Thomist* 52 (1988): 369–90.

²² I use the word "violent" in the metaphysical sense because the sexual act does not contribute of itself to an "aptitude" in the nature of the sexual act but is forced upon it by an extrinsic principle in this case a contraceptive. Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Com. Met.*, V., lect. 6, note 835; VII, lect. 8, note 1442c.

²³ Contraceptive acts are intrinsically evil when freely chosen by both parties. Not every use of contraception (unless it is also an abortifacient) is wrong, such as protection from unjust acts, as in the case of rape, because these acts violate the integrity of the individual's will. A woman, for example, can defend herself because rape concerns itself by the forced introduction of sperm into the vagina, when this is a real foreseeable possibility as in the case of a marauding army about to rape women in a village. See William May, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*, (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2000): 140–42.

do occur. Even if some patients may die as the result of the simplest of procedures, these accidents of their nature will be in fact beside the intention of the physician and the unfortunate outcome of one or many *per accidens* cause(s) beyond his or her control. However, if the patient dies by willful negligence on the part of the doctor, then the doctor becomes a *per se* cause of the action of killing.

Whatever its motivation, crushing the skull of an unborn child is still the taking away of an innocent life.²⁴ Whatever the primary motive or other secondary motives, the act is *per se* or an objectively *per se* causal act of killing, not a *per accidens* death. Even though it is not motivated by the desire to avoid the reception of children, it is a moral species in line with abortion, no matter how much one tries to redefine the moral species. If this is true, then a fetal craniotomy is rightly referred to, in the language of Pius XI as a “direct killing of the innocent.”²⁵ Further, this is an instance of one person being sacrificed for the sake of another. It is not the sacrifice of a *part* of one person for the sake of the whole body of that same person.²⁶

Realigning the skull of an infant to save the life of the mother may save her, but the doctor is doing so by objectifying or instrumentalizing the child as a means to an end. The child is no longer sacred but an obstacle to someone’s continued life, even if its situation is aggressive or death-dealing to the mother. The baby is not *intentionally* harming the mother; this is only the result of the incongruity between his or her head and the size of the birth canal. The objective purpose of any medical enterprise is to aid in the healing of physical problems, not to terminate a life that poses various terrible “inconveniences.” And if a medical problem is irremediable, except through an act that objectively and essentially kills, then the mother would heroically die for life; however, such a case is rare in the modern world because of a medical procedure called caesarian section.²⁷ Unfortunately, in many countries in Eastern Europe, craniotomy is the normal practice.

Conclusion

It seems as if Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle’s defense of craniotomy presupposes that the action of killing in craniotomy, as they describe the act, is

²⁴ Scientists have actually devised tests to show that the fetus is feeling pain in any operation that is death-dealing.

²⁵ Pius XI, *Christian Marriage* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1969), 22.

²⁶ See Benedict Guevin, OSB, “The Principles of Informed (Proxy) Consent and Totality in the Reputable Practice of Medicine,” *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 41 (1996): 189–202.

²⁷ Recently John Paul beatified Gianna Beretta Molla who chose to die that her child might live. See <http://www.gianna.org> where her story is told.

not a grave disorder, so that one's immediate intention of a moral object could rule out any immediate and objective death-dealing blow even though the redescribed action does that. But, direct or immediate intervention with a doctor's hands and tools on a fetus's very life is not at all an indifferent act. The act of an efficient cause necessarily kills the little child, even if reluctantly.

Can a doctor licitly perform a dangerous experiment on an individual when no benefit can accrue to that individual, and without his permission? Will crushing a skull, or euphemistically reshaping it, produce any benefit to the fetus? Is it better to kill directly than let a child die from a debilitating disease? Can I hurry up his death or harvest his organs while he is dying? Of course not, according to the other well-known writings of Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle.

The reason for invoking the terms "direct" and "indirect" is that the kinds of physical causality of the act are what is in question. *Per se* and occasional/*per accidens* causes are clearly different in their influences on an effect. When there is an efficient cause that of itself wounds, maims, and kills, that cause of itself is a direct force doing the killing, whereas if a lethal action is directed to something else (such as self-defense against a potential murderer), and a deadly effect as byproduct may or may not occur, then the cause is an occasional one, not a direct cause.

It would appear, if this previous analysis is correct, that the solution of Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle to the problem of craniotomy is really based upon the notion (in my terminology) that reshaping the head is an occasional causal action, whereas common-sense realism based on observation understands the procedure to be precisely of itself an efficient cause of killing. It has the necessary property of being death-dealing without the due circumstances of defending against a guilty party or an unjust aggressor. Hence, in my view, craniotomy, contra Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle, is a direct killing of innocent human life, and not a side effect of an occasional cause beside the intention. N V

The Eucharistic Context of “The Breaking of the Bread” in Luke-Acts: A Catholic View

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WALKING AWAY from the holy city of Jerusalem shortly after the events surrounding Jesus’ Passion and death, two men come upon and converse with the Risen Jesus, whom they fail to recognize until, at table, he takes, blesses, breaks, and gives them bread—reminiscent of his actions at the feeding of the five thousand (Luke 9:12–17) and the Last Supper (22:14–20)—and vanishes, inspiring the enlightened disciples to return to Jerusalem and inspiring faith in the Risen Lord (Luke 24:13–35). This episode on the road to Emmaus presents a synopsis of the Eucharistic experience of the postresurrection Lukan community, in which the Risen Jesus becomes present in the “breaking of the bread” (κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου), a theme that is further developed in Acts (2:42–47; 20:7–12; 27:33–38). The meals Jesus shared with his disciples and with others expressed the communal unity and fellowship essential to their mission, and served as occasions for teaching, healing, and prophecy (for example, with Levi, 5:27–39; Pharisees, 7:36–50; 11:37–54; 14:1–24; Zacchaeus, 19:1–10; and with the disciples in Jerusalem, 24:36–53).¹

¹ Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 79–111, lists ten meals in Luke’s gospel, and eight situations in Acts, that he believes show the development of the Eucharist. While I think LaVerdiere overstates his case to see “Eucharist” in almost every meal situation in Luke-Acts, he does an admirable job of explaining the background to the “breaking of the bread” theme in Luke-Acts and its relationship to the Eucharist.

What he commissioned the disciples to do in “remembrance of me” (εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, 22:19) at the Last Supper developed into a continuing pattern of sacred communal meals through which the presence of the Risen Lord was “recognized.” This paper will examine key postresurrection meal accounts in Luke-Acts to show how they describe the experience and aspects of the development of the Eucharist in these communities.

Background: The Importance of Meals in Judaism and Jesus’ Ministry

Meals serve as an important expression of purity (טהרה) in ancient Judaism, wherein people eat what is considered acceptable with “acceptable” people—one reason why Jesus’ welcoming and eating with tax collectors and sinners bothered the scribes and Pharisees (Lk 15:2)—to reveal the purity of both food and the people, expressing the holiness of Israel as God’s chosen people. In the book of Leviticus, for example, the imperative for purity is expressed by God’s command that “you shall be holy, because I am holy” (11:45; 19:2; 20:7); uncleanness will result in death (15:31), and failure to observe the statutes (תקנות) and judgments (משפטים) results in expulsion from the land. The detailed descriptions and regulations of sacrifices throughout Leviticus speak to the importance of purity and holiness in Israel.²

In the Priestly theology of Leviticus, freewill choices by human beings are responsible for committing “demonic” acts—impurity results from wrongdoing—which in turn could pollute the sanctuary that represented the presence of God. Therefore, by such impure actions, people “forced God out of the sanctuary and out of their lives.”³ The absence of God’s presence is equated with death. Holiness gives life and overcomes impurity–death; Israel serves God by obeying the commandments and thus overcomes impurity–death.⁴ Milgrom identifies purity and holiness “as antonyms,” so that the identification of impurity with death stands in contrast to holiness, which represents life. The later Priestly source “H,” extends holiness to all Israel, including even the גר, the resident alien, who are obliged to observe the commandments. Sanctification (מקדש) is an ongoing process for both priests and laity (Lev 21:8, 15, 23; 22:9, 16, 32); the sacrificial system fulfills the psychological, emotional, and religious needs of the people in terms of purification and restoration. Effec-

² Bruce Chilton, *A Feast of Meanings: Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus through Johanne Circles* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 13–14.

³ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 46–47.

tive expiatory sacrifice requires an acknowledgment of guilt (כַּזָּב) by the worshipper, and reparation.⁵ Jesus likewise responded favorably to those who acknowledge their sins in contrast to the self-righteous (for example, Lk 18:9–14). Another important aspect of the sacrificial system in Leviticus is the concern for the poor: regardless of means, provision was made for any Israelite to bring an acceptable offering to the Lord.⁶

The extension of holiness to all Israel in the sacrificial system, including the resident alien, along with the concern for the poor, are reflected in Jesus' actions of embracing and eating with those considered "impure" by legalists. Jesus is sanctified by God as the holy one (Lk 1:35), filled with the Holy Spirit and bringing forth the holiness of God among his people, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel (37:24–28) as the "new David," who is God's agent in sanctifying the people.⁷ Therefore Jesus represents the everlasting covenant of peace and the sanctuary (Ez 37:26–27). Jesus' desire to enter a Samaritan village (Lk 9:52–56), his healings and ministry in Galilee—an area avoided by legalistic Jews because of purity concerns—reveal the extension of holiness and membership in God's kingdom through his ministry. Whereas in the Hebrew Bible holiness is transmitted to things (Ex 29:37; 30:26–29; Lv 6:11, 20), or in Ezekiel from holy things to people (42:14; 44:19; 46:20), Jesus' holiness is transferred directly to people, as evidenced in his healings and cleansing of impurities.⁸

During the time of Jesus' ministry, Pharisees held influence among Jews in encouraging proper participation in the cult—note that many local scribes were likely Pharisees, which may explain why they are often grouped together in conflict with Jesus (for example, Lk 5:30; 11:37–53; 16:14–15; 20:45–47)—and served as interpreters of the Torah, including the declaration of "clean" and "unclean." Enter Jesus, whose meal fellowship in the gospels clearly challenges the conventional notions of purity, in respect to both the eating of foods and the status of those with whom he ate. The observation, by Jesus himself, that he is considered a "glutton"

⁵ *Ibid.*, 48–50. The earlier Priestly source identified by Milgrom as P, restricted holiness to the sanctuary, priests, and Nazirites (Nm 6:5–8); H extends the concept more broadly (48).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁷ Hanna Stettler, "Sanctification in the Jesus Tradition," *Biblica* 85 (2004): 153–78, esp. 156.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 160–65. Stettler sees Jesus as fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel 36, placing a renewed Spirit and heart within God's people, thus making them obedient to God's commandments (and pure).

(φάγοις) and a “friend of tax collectors and sinners” (τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωῶν 7:33–35), shows that, in the eyes of the Pharisees and other religious leaders, he eats with the wrong people. The group of “sinners” may collectively include those considered impure by their lifestyle and social status: In Rabbinic literature these are often the יְרֵאָה־עַם, the *’am ha’aretz*, “people of the land,” considered impure due to their work, which prevents them from fulfilling the requirements of the Law, or because they engage in trade and fellowship with diverse groups of people.⁹ For Jesus, love and mercy—part of YHWH’s self-identification, יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ (see Ex 34:6)—become the true meaning of holiness, as he recasts Leviticus 19:2 (“be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy”) as “be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful” (6:36). By forgiving sin and healing, Jesus overcomes the impurities that formerly excluded people from God’s kingdom. Jesus effectively abrogates purity Torah, and its divisions, in favor of ethical sanctification and the primacy of love and mercy.¹⁰

Wealthy foreigners who received tax-collecting contracts often hired tax collectors; many times these taxes consumed farmers’ profits, which caused them to be in debt. The tax collectors were free to add a profit for themselves in addition to the required taxes, and often engaged in corrupt practices; thus, this group was especially despised.¹¹ When Jesus commissions the seventy helpers to preach and heal (Lk 10:1–12), he insists that they remain in whatever houses accept them during their stay in various villages. Jesus’ command conflicts with the pharisaic view because it presupposes that the homes into which the disciples are welcomed, and the food served, will be clean. Further, the meals Jesus celebrates with his disciples and a variety of people considered “unclean,” anticipate the purity of the Kingdom of God; these meals become “parables of the kingdom,” with the wine drunk reflective of the *kiddush*—a festive drinking of wine done at Sabbaths and festivals—celebrating fellowship in anticipation of the joy of God’s kingdom.¹²

John Perry notes that after the Pharisees charge Jesus with eating with sinners (Lk 15:1–2), a series of parables follow—the lost sheep (15:3–7), the gold coin (vv. 8–10), and the prodigal son (vv. 11–32)—all of which end with the theme of rejoicing, with the final parable ending in the context of a feast celebrating the return of the lost son. Perry posits that Jesus probably taught these parables during the meals he celebrated with his disciples in anticipation of the kingdom. In the story of Zachaeus (19:1–10), Jesus

⁹ See *ibid.*, 24–27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 166–73.

¹¹ Anthony J. Saldarini, *Publicans* (San Francisco: Harper, 1985), 841.

¹² Chilton, *Feast of Meanings*, 68.

recognizes his faith and tells him that he must stay at his house that day, which implies eating together; in the context of his conversion, this hopeless “sinner” is forgiven and promised salvation (v. 10), again in conflict with the prevailing views of the Jewish leaders. These meals, therefore, serve as an essential component of Jesus’ teaching in his prophetic mission, wherein he proclaimed and anticipated the coming Kingdom of God.¹³ In summary, Jesus likely used these fellowship meals for teaching and prayer, and it seems likely—based on the many instances where he takes, blesses, and breaks bread in the gospels, Acts, and 1 Corinthians 11—that it was his regular practice to offer a typical Jewish table blessing at these meals.

The Emmaus Story

Meeting the Lord on the Journey Away from Jerusalem (Luke 24:13–16)

The story begins with two disciples dejectedly walking away from Jerusalem, the holy city of destiny, symbolic of their failure to yet understand the implications of Jesus’ death and the empty tomb. They are headed toward the unknown village of Emmaus, “about sixty stadia” or seven miles from Jerusalem; thus, though moving away in dejection, they remain within the environs of Jerusalem.¹⁴ In this context, while discussing the events of Jesus’ passion and death, they meet up with the Risen Jesus, whom they fail to recognize. The verb translated in the revised NAB as “conversing” (v. 14) is *ὠμίλουν*, which indicates an extended discussion; “all these things,” recalls for the reader the previous story (vv. 1–12) of the empty tomb. They were “discussing” (*συζητεῖν*) the events: the verb, used here and at the Last Supper (22:23), is translated “discuss” in both places, but carries the sense of inquiring or examining—that is, they are searching for meaning in light of the difficult events.¹⁵ The asking of questions also reflects the questioning that occurred at the Last Supper (22:23–24), and the questions asked at the Jewish Passover ritual (Ex 12:26).

Asking questions becomes a central element in the Passover ritual that, according to Luke, is the context of the Last Supper (Lk 22:15); the questioning here (see also the questions in vv. 17, 18, 19) connects this meal

¹³ John Michael Perry, *The Evolution of the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1994), 11–15.

¹⁴ Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1561–62, offers a detailed analysis of the various interpretations of Emmaus and concludes that its location is uncertain. He concludes, “Emmaus is in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and that is all that matters” (1562).

¹⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Luke* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 393.

to the Last Supper. I also see a catechetical purpose here: Just as the Jewish Passover celebrates the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, so the Christian sacred meals celebrate a “new Passover” inaugurated by the death and Resurrection of Jesus, who becomes the host of their sacred meals done in “memory” of him. When Jesus “walks with them” (v. 15) the audience is reminded of the previous journey to Jerusalem (9:51–19:27), a key element of Luke’s gospel and the city of Jesus’ destiny.¹⁶ However, since “their eyes were kept from recognizing him,” (v. 16) their direction is *away* rather than toward Jerusalem, the place where the prophecy of Jesus’ death and Resurrection will be fulfilled (13:33–35). The disciples fail to recognize the Risen Jesus because his resurrected presence differs from how he appeared before; their clinging to his former presence and the accompanying sadness represent incomplete faith that prevents them recognizing his new, risen presence.¹⁷ Recognition of the Risen Lord requires faith and openness to transformation; to cling to past notions causes spiritual blindness.

Conversing with the Risen Jesus (Luke 24:17–24)

As Jesus asks the two men what they are speaking about, the men “stood still, looking sad.” This description adds a “novelistic touch” that vividly conveys the emotions of sorrow to the reader. Of the two men, only Cleopas is named, which may reflect actual historical tradition or inventive storytelling.¹⁸ The detail seems to me a reflection of an actual historical person. Cleopas questions Jesus’ apparent lack of knowledge of the events—ironically of the life and death of Jesus, whom they fail to recognize—with exasperation, and refers to him as a “visitor” (παροικεῖς), that is, simply one of the many pilgrims in Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover. This serves as an ironic understatement, since the audience recalls Jesus’ previous triumphal entry into Jerusalem (19:38) when he was acclaimed as a king who comes in the name of the Lord.¹⁹

Clearly, the disciples’ recognition of Jesus in his pre-resurrection form gave them some knowledge about him: “a man, a prophet, powerful in deed and word” (24:19); however, the ἀνὴρ connected to προφήτης reveals that their pre-resurrection understanding of Jesus failed to recognize his divinity. Jesus is presented as a Moses-like figure (v. 21) who will

¹⁶ John Paul Heil, *The Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts: An Audience-Oriented Approach* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 200.

¹⁷ Raymond Orlett, “The Influence of the Early Liturgy Upon the Emmaus Account,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 21 (1959): 212–19, see 215.

¹⁸ Johnson, *Luke*, 393.

¹⁹ Heil, *Meal Scenes*, 202.

redeem (λυτροῦσθαι, “set free, liberate”) Israel, reflecting the “prophet like Moses” of Deuteronomy 18:15; this same passage is quoted in Acts 7:37 by Stephen, when he speaks about God “raising up” a prophet who will be a deliverer (λυτρωτήν, Acts 7:35).²⁰ The word for “raise up,” ἀναστήσει, is the same verb used to describe the Resurrection in Luke 24:7. Jesus, therefore, fulfills Scripture as the prophet, like Moses, who brings redemption. Ironically, the disciples do recognize that it is the “third day” (τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν)—the day of Jesus’ resurrection, which they yet fail to recognize—and, like their counterparts in Jerusalem, they put no faith in the account of the women (24:11). They remain closed to the revelation before them, even though angels (ἀγγέλων, “messengers” from God) had reportedly appeared and the body was missing.

*Jesus Explains his Death as Fulfillment
of the Law and Prophets (Luke 24:25–27)*

Jesus begins by calling them “foolish” since they yet fail to accept and recognize Jesus as a suffering prophet/messiah—this despite his previous passion predictions (9:22; 17:25; 24:7), which allude to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 52:13–53:12. In addition, they are “slow of heart” (βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ), which in Semitic thought is the center of moral reasoning and intellect; to have a “slow heart” emphasizes their inability to understand (Ps 95:8). His suffering “was necessary” (ἔδει, used by Luke to refer to the Divine will), just as it was “necessary” for him to stay with Zacchaeus (Lk 19:5), and to sacrifice the Passover lamb (22:7), which became a symbol of Christ, the Christian “Passover lamb” sacrificed on behalf of humanity’s sins.²¹ Jesus now explains the events of his life—though he remains unrecognized by them—as fulfilling “all the Scriptures.” This fulfillment includes *all* Scripture—a Lukan theme—and *begins* with the Torah and Prophets, but also includes the Psalms (24:44), and shows how Jesus will transcend their view of him as only “a prophet.” We already see at this point a parallel to the Eucharistic liturgy, beginning with an encounter and gathering, the presentation of Scripture, preaching, and, next, the breaking of the bread. Having the Scriptures explained in terms of God’s plan (ἔδει) prepares the disciples to recognize Jesus; however, they must first offer hospitality, an essential aspect of Christian Eucharist.

²⁰ The use of the words “powerful in deed and word” (δυνατὸς ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ, Lk 24:19) bolsters my view that this is a reference to the “prophet like Moses” of Deuteronomy 18:15.

²¹ Eugene LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom of God: The Origins of the Eucharist in the Gospel of Luke* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994), 166. For other uses of δεῖ in Luke see 2:49; 4:43; 13:14, 33; 21:9; 22:37; and Johnson, *Luke*, 395.

*Recognizing the Risen Jesus in the
Breaking of the Bread (Luke 24:28–35)*

As they near the village, Jesus “gave the impression” (Revised New American Bible [RNAB]) that he was continuing on his journey; the verb *προσεποιήσατο*, means “to pretend,” as if Jesus were testing their response. In response, the disciples “urged” him—*παρεβιάσαντο*, “strongly urged/prevailed upon”—Jesus to spend the evening with them, offering him *hospitality*, an essential element of the early Christian (and contemporary) celebration of the Eucharist.²² As with the multiplication story (9:12), it is near evening—the time when the Passover supper is celebrated and the beginning of a new day in Hebraic thinking—and they ask Jesus to “stay with us” (*Μείνον μεθ ἡμῶν*). This use of *μένω*, “to stay/dwell with,” recalls its use in the infancy narratives (1:56) where Mary stays with Elizabeth for “three months,” missionary hospitality (9:4; 10:7), the Zacchaeus story (19:5), and in the ministry of Peter and Paul (Acts 9:43; 16:15; 18:3, 20; 21:7, 8; 28:16)—all of which are instances of dwelling in homes with others, the context for the early Christian celebration of the Lord’s Supper.²³ Again I note that at this point in the story we have a gathering with Jesus, discussion of the Scriptures, and shared hospitality; the next logical element, then, is the breaking of the bread. While the two disciples have temporarily abandoned their faith, Jesus will not abandon them but will bring them to a renewed and deeper faith.²⁴

Now, at table, Jesus switches roles and becomes the host of the meal—reminiscent of the role of God as host of the banquet in Psalm 23—showing how their invitation of Jesus into their dwelling, symbolic of faith, will enable them to experience him in the breaking of the bread. The actions of Jesus and the words used—*took, blessed, broke, gave*—recall for the reader the multiplication story (Lk 9:16) and the Last Supper (Lk 22:19). Here Jesus “blesses” (*εὐλόγησεν*) the bread, where in 22:19 he “gave thanks” (*εὐχαριστήσαζ*): In Jewish prayer (as in the Table prayers) one blesses God; giving thanks is more reflective of Greek influence, and, here, likely reflects the convergence of traditions though the essential meaning is the same.²⁵ The text notes that “at table” (RNAB), which translates the Greek *κατακλιθῆναι*, which can be more literally translated “was reclining (at table),” which again recalls the Last Supper (22:14;

²² See Johnson, *Luke*, 396, for more comment on the specified verbs.

²³ The use of *μένω* is important in the gospel of John, and its use in Luke may reflect a relationship between the two gospels.

²⁴ See LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom*, 168.

²⁵ See Perry, *The Evolution of the Lord’s Supper*, 44–48.

ἀνέπεσεν), and reflects a formal meal or symposium.²⁶ In the giving of the blessed and broken bread, “their eyes were opened” (v. 31), enabling them to “recognize” (ἐπέγνωσαν) the Risen Jesus: The use of “recognized” instead of “see” reflects how the early Christians recognized the presence of Jesus during their celebrations of the Eucharist, though he was present in a different way from when he walked in their midst. *The early Christians recognize the presence of the Risen Jesus in Word and sacrament—the belief of Christians who today believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist—not an appearance of the earthly Jesus.* This seems confirmed by the Greek text, where “he vanished from their sight” (αὐτὸς ἀφαντοζ ἐγένετο) literally means he “became invisible” to them; rather than “vanishing” and being “gone,” Jesus remains but is unseen.²⁷

Whereas before the disciples were accused by Jesus of having “slow hearts,” after experiencing the Risen Lord in the breaking of the bread they confess that their hearts were “burning” (καιομένη, v. 32) within them when Jesus “was opening” (διήνοιγεν) the Scriptures to them (v. 32). The verb translated “burning” often represents the emotion of love in Greek literature, and in the LXX is often used to refer to the presence of the Lord (Ex 3:2; Dt 4:11; 9:15; Ps 49:3; Sir 48:1; Is 30:27; 62:1);²⁸ here it reflects the presence of the Lord in the opening of Scripture, similar to the Hebrew concept of opening or revealing (פָּתַח) the Torah (for example, Psalm 119:18).

Now, having been enlightened through the opening of Scripture and the breaking of the bread, the disciples reverse course from the abandonment of their faith and mission—symbolized by the journey *away* from Jerusalem—and return to Jerusalem with new faith and zeal (Lk 24:33). There they are greeted with the news that Jesus (the Lord, κύριος) “has truly been raised” (ὄντως ἠγέρθη): What the two men/angels in dazzling apparel said in 24:6 (“he has been raised”) is now the belief of the community. Finally, the two disciples relate their own experience of the Risen Jesus “on the road” (ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ)—recalling the travel theme of Luke—wherein he became known to them (ἐγνωσθη) in the breaking of the bread (τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου), the phrase found in Acts (2:42, 46; 20:7, 11; 27:35) to refer to the early Christian Eucharistic experience.

²⁶ Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 282; LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom*, 169.

²⁷ Zerwick and Grosvenor, *Grammatical Analysis*, 283.

²⁸ Johnson, *Luke*, 397.

Theological Summary

The Emmaus story may be based on some actual historical occurrence—for example, Mark 16:12 (longer ending) refers to an appearance to two disciples walking in the country—but has been embellished by Luke and the postresurrection Church for apologetic and catechetical reasons. The Eucharistic community gathers together for shared hospitality and the proclamation of the Word, the fulfillment of which is found in the Risen Lord. Following Jesus' tradition with them during his ministry, and the commission at the Last Supper, the community continues to gather for sacred meals of fellowship and prayer. At such meals, the presence of the Risen Lord was experienced and needed to be communicated both catechetically to the community of believers and catechumens, and in defense of the Church's essential belief in the resurrection and the ongoing presence of the Risen Lord in Word and sacrament. This presence, we will see below in Acts, signifies the unity of the Christian community, and provides healing and strength.

The Breaking of the Bread in the Acts of the Apostles

Eating Salt with the Risen Jesus

Acts 1:4 states that the Risen Jesus was “meeting with them” (the disciples) during the forty days preceding the “promise of the Father,” that is, the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In Greek, however, “meeting with them” is literally *συναλιζόμενος*, which may be translated “to take salt together,” that is, to share a meal.²⁹ In the ancient world, salt was essential as a preservative and seasoning, and would always be a part of a meal; hence, to “share salt” with others refers to a eating a meal.³⁰ Salt was used for the purification of Jewish sacrifices (Ex 30:34–35; Ez 43:23–24); in Leviticus 2:13, instructions are given that sacrifices “shall be seasoned with salt” (במלח המלח), and mentions the “salt of the covenant of your God” (מלח ברית אלהיך). Another reference to the covenant with the

²⁹ While a diversity of opinion exists on the translation of *συναλιζόμενος*, I follow the argument that this verb literally means “eating salt with” against “to gather together” and, therefore, is “an allusion to the fellowship meals (like that of Emmaus) in which the disciples encountered the risen Christ. Richard J. Dillon, “Acts of the Apostles,” in *New Jerusalem Bible Commentary*, eds. R. E. Brown et al. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991), 723, claims that the meaning “eating with” is assured by Luke 24:43, Acts 10:41 (*synepagomen*), and the singular number and present tense of the participle. G. W. H. Lampe, “Acts,” in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Matthew Black (Don Mills, ON, Canada: Thomas Nelson, 1962), 886.

³⁰ Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Breaking of the Bread: The Development of the Eucharist in the Acts of the Apostles* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998), 39–58.

Lord is found in Numbers 18:19, translated “inviolable covenant” (New American Bible [NAB]), but literally “a covenant of salt forever” (עֹלָם בְּרִית מֶלַח).³¹ Therefore the use of this expression in Acts 1:4 reflects the experience of the Risen Lord in the communal meals of the early Christian community, which celebrated the “new Covenant” (Lk 22:20; ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη). Appropriately, then, Luke’s second volume opens with notice of the continuing practice of communal meals in which the Risen Lord is “recognized.”

*The Breaking of the Bread in the Communal Life
of the Early Church (Acts 2:42–47)*

Just as at Emmaus Jesus spoke of fulfilling the Scriptures, previous to this summary of the communal life of the early Church, Peter—taking roles formerly held by the earthly Jesus, a common theme in Acts—speaks of the fulfillment of Scripture in his Pentecost speech, using references from the Prophets and Psalms (see Lk 24:44) as midrashic proof texts for the Messiahship of the Risen Jesus (Is 2:2 and Jl 3:1–5 in Acts 2:17–21; Ps 16:8–11 in Acts 2:25–28; and Ps 110:1 in Acts 2:34). The chapter then ends with a summary of the communal life in the early Apostolic Church (Acts 2:42), which includes “the teaching of the Apostles” (τῆ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀποστόλων), communal life (τῆ κοινωνία), the breaking of the bread (τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου), and the prayers (προσευχαίς). These actions reveal a community that engages in liturgical worship as part of its essential character. The experience of the Risen Lord at table in Emmaus and Jerusalem evidently inspired a regular practice, for the people broke bread in their homes on a daily basis (v. 46), and in the larger fellowship gatherings (v. 42; see 1 Cor 11:18–26).

Continuing the work of the earthly Jesus, the apostles performed “signs and wonders”; the people hold goods in common; and meet in the temple area and break bread in their homes. This reflects how the earliest Jewish Christians for a time continued to engage in Jewish prayer, symbolized by the reference to the temple, but also have established “house churches”—an example is seen in Paul’s description of the Eucharist in 1 Corinthians 11—for the celebration of their sacred covenant meals with the Risen Lord. From the first Passover on (Ex 12), it is clear that the family home is the typical place for the celebration of Jewish religious meals; now, the Christian home becomes the place for Christian sacred meals. Numerous similarities exist between Luke’s description of the communal life of the

³¹ See *ibid.*; James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 7–8; William Neil, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 65.

early Church and the celebration of the Eucharist in the early Church document (ca. 90?), *The Didache*.³²

In *Didache*, number 9, instruction is given for the celebration of the Eucharist. Thanks is to be given over broken bread for “the life and knowledge you have made known to us through your servant Jesus”: this reflects the knowledge and recognition of God’s truth communicated by the Risen Lord as he explained the Scriptures on the road to Emmaus. The Eucharist is described as “spiritual food and drink” that gives “life eternal”; the concluding section offers prayer for the unity of the Church. *Didache*, number 14, instructs the people to gather for Eucharist “on the Lord’s Day,” Sunday, “and break bread and offer the Eucharist.” Again, this follows the Lukan schema of equating the breaking of the bread on the Lord’s Day with the celebration of the communal Eucharist. It also calls for a prior confession of faults, “so that your sacrifice may be a pure one.” This recalls the purity that is an essential component of Jewish sacred meals and the use of salt in Jewish sacrificial meals.³³ The ideal set forth in this passage of Acts provides the background for the following two occurrences of the breaking of bread.

Paul Breaks Bread at Troas and Revives Eutychus (Acts 20:7–12)

The community is meeting “on the first day of the week”—τῇ μῃ τῶν σαββάτων, literally “on one of the Sabbaths”—which, as at Emmaus, is Sunday, the day of the Resurrection and the celebration of the Christian Passover, the Eucharist.³⁴ The context is “after the feast of Unleavened Bread,” that is, the Passover (Acts 20:6); the service could well have occurred in the evening after 6 p.m. on Saturday, if Luke is using the Jewish concept of the Sabbath as an analogy here.³⁵

At this gathering, Paul was “speaking” (διελέγετο, literally “lecturing”) to the community, most probably explicating the Scripture texts used in the service; this parallels the presentation of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, and, as with the journey theme in the Emmaus story, Paul and his companions are in the midst of a journey. A young man named Eutychus—the name Εὐτυχοῦς means “good fortune/lucky” and may be purposefully used by Luke, in light of the healing that will occur in the

³² The references to the *Didache* in this paper are from *Early Christian Writings*, ed. Andrew Louth, trans. Maxwell Staniforth, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1987), 194–97.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Dunn, *Acts*, 268, makes a similar connection and notes the parallels in evidence of this tradition in the early Church in 1 Cor 16:2 and Rev 1:10.

³⁵ Neil, *Acts*, 211.

context of this celebration—is sitting in an open window.³⁶ Apparently Paul's long-winded sermon ("he kept on speaking until midnight," RNAB) caused the young man to doze and fall to his apparent death (Acts 20:9). Paul, however, comes down and heals the boy by touching him and, reminiscent of Jesus healing Jairus's daughter (Lk 8:50, 52), tells the people, "Do not be alarmed," since he had life in him. Paul's actions also reflect those of the prophet Elijah in healing the son of the widow at Zerephath (1 Kgs 17:19–22), and of the prophet Elisha in healing the son of the Shunammite woman (2 Kgs 4:32–36).³⁷ Note that before Elijah heals the woman's son, he prophesizes that her flour and oil will not run out (this is fulfilled); after Elisha healed the Shunammite's son, he multiplied loaves (2 Kgs 4:42–44). These prophetic stories from the Hebrew Scriptures perhaps provide a source as well as a parallel for Luke's crafting of this incident.

Next, after Paul had "gone up and having broken the bread" (καὶ κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον) and spoke further before departing, the people were "immeasurably comforted."³⁸ This scene shows how Paul provided comfort and encouragement for the community by providing life in place of death, and gives an example of the encouragement he provided the churches during his farewell journey. The accompanying of his instruction with the Eucharistic breaking of the bread recalls the commitment of the believers in Acts 2:42, 46, and in this context serves as a type of farewell meal paralleling Jesus at his Last Supper.³⁹ The scene also provides an example of the healing effects of the Eucharistic celebration, wherein spiritual and even physical healing occurs as the community is nourished spiritually through teaching and sacramental participation. The actions of the community reflect typical Jewish hospitality wherein a lengthy fellowship takes place along with the provision of food and drink.⁴⁰ Finally, the story shows that "death is powerless in the Eucharistic assembly," and "the breaking of the bread is a source of life."⁴¹ We also are reminded that Jesus broke bread after rising from the dead (Lk 24:31), again presenting the life-giving effects of the Eucharist for the Christian community (see Jn 6:50–51).

³⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), 356.

³⁷ Neil, *Acts*, 212.

³⁸ Johnson, *Acts*, 356.

³⁹ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1994), 250–51.

⁴⁰ Dunn, *Acts*, 268–69; however, I disagree with Dunn's view that to think of this meal in terms of a sermon and Eucharist is "anachronistic."

⁴¹ LaVerdiere, *The Breaking of the Bread*, 200.

Paul Breaks Bread During the Storm at Sea (Acts 27:33–38)

Now Paul is traveling to Rome, a prisoner in the hands of the centurion Julius, along with Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, who was with Paul when he broke bread at Troas (Acts 20:4). This section is the final “we” passage in Acts, which raises the possibility that Luke was present during this voyage. A parallel between Paul and Jesus will again be seen, not only in the breaking of the bread, but in Paul’s bravery in taking control in the midst of a terrifying storm (Lk 8:22–27). The vocabulary of salvation (σωθῆναι, Acts 27:32) and survival (σωτηρία, Acts 27:34) connect survival at sea as symbolic of Christian salvation, with the storm symbolic of the chaos that threatens salvation.⁴² In Hebraic thought the sea represents the powers of chaos that can only be harnessed by Divine intervention (Ps 107:23–32). When the sailors had threatened to abandon ship, Paul warns them that doing so will prevent them from being saved: It will only be through communal unity and sharing in the food Paul will offer when he breaks the bread that they will survive and be saved.⁴³

While they are adrift and seemingly abandoned to the elements, day breaks (Acts 27:33), reminiscent of Easter morning; Paul urges the passengers to eat, since they have gone without food for fourteen days. Paul then “took bread, gave thanks to God in front of them all, broke it, and began to eat” (RNAB, v. 35; λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαρίστησεν τῷ θεῷ ἐνώπιον πάντων καὶ κλάσας ἤρξατο ἐσθίειν); the words used parallel the Eucharistic formula (Lk 9:16; 22:19; 24:30). The detail that Paul ate in front of the passengers—who are presumably non-believers—recalls the Risen Jesus eating a piece of baked fish in front of his disciples (Lk 24:43). As the Risen Jesus gave an example for his disciples of the necessity of eating communally, so Paul gives thanks as a Christ-like figure and, by eating in front of them, witnesses to the life-giving presence of Christ.⁴⁴ Following Paul’s example, the rest of the passengers were encouraged (εὐθύοι) and ate (Acts 27:36–37); having followed Paul’s teaching and example, they landed safely on the shore (v. 44).

Paul’s actions here recall the importance previously placed on meal fellowship (Acts 2:42–47), and its healing, life-giving effects (20:7–12); the Eucharistic meal transforms the participants to greater faith, as it did to the disciples at Emmaus (24:30–35). Whether the participants who ate following Paul’s breaking of the bread received the blessed Eucharistic bread or other food is not clear; I argue that they received Eucharistic

⁴² Ibid., 214–18.

⁴³ Heil, *Meal Scenes*, 294–96.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 300–301; LaVerdiere, *The Breaking of the Bread*, 221.

bread, and that this reveals the gentile mission. Here the promise of salvation (Luke 21:18) is expanded to include all disciples, in fulfillment of the prophecy in Luke 3:6.⁴⁵ The meal empowers Paul for his mission, and brings faith to those who would otherwise have been in danger of perishing, and recalls the encouragement given to the people at Troas (Acts 20:12). For the reader, the story reminds us of the saving, healing, and transforming nature of the Eucharist.

Conclusion

In the breaking of the bread the Risen Lord is recognized, as at Emmaus; this reflects the experience and recognition of the presence of the Risen Jesus in the sacred meals celebrated in memory of him by the early Christians, and carries over into the “real presence” theology of sacramental groups today. Jesus’ previous meals, particularly the Feeding of the Five Thousand and the Last Supper, set the stage for the early Church’s continuation and development of his meal traditions as an essential part of community life and a source of spiritual nourishment. The development of this theme in Acts shows the importance of the ritual of the breaking of the bread in daily communal life, and the healing and saving effects of sharing in the breaking of the bread, which is Luke’s designation for what eventually becomes the Christian celebration of the Eucharist. **N-V**

⁴⁵ See Heil, *Meal Scenes*, 303–4; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 336–7.

Known in the Breaking of Bread: A Protestant View

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Introduction

MEAL STORIES, holy and common, in Luke-Acts have drawn considerable attention from scholars in recent years. At least one scholar interprets the Lukan meals as allusions to the Eucharist, noting the similarities in Jesus' breaking of bread with the disciples.¹ This paper will argue the opposite: The paradigm of meals in Luke-Acts is the story of the feeding of the five thousand in Luke 9, which is non-Eucharistic in nature. This paper will examine four related meal passages to show that they are all linked to one another, both in sentence structure and in theme. Jesus' identity and presence among his disciples is a central concern. The disciples' understanding of Jesus' identity changes as events unfold in Luke-Acts. An emphasis on clarifying his identity gives way to a need to continue reminding his disciples of his presence among them, especially after his resurrection and in the formational days of the early Church. This paper will propose that, in the narrative of Luke-Acts, the disciples came to understand certain meals as experiences in which they are reminded of Jesus' identity and experience his ongoing presence in their community. The association of the meals with the experience of Christ's presence has already been noted in John Paul Heil's book, *Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts*.² This paper will explore in more detail the connection Heil makes and propose an even stronger link than Heil does.

¹ Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 83.

² John Paul Heil, *Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999).

Jesus' Presence and Identity in the Feeding of the Five Thousand

The feeding of the five thousand pericope in Luke holds a significance not always appreciated by the casual reader. This pericope presents meal elements repeated later in various passages throughout Luke-Acts. In all cases, the living presence of Jesus is a theme the author strongly emphasizes. In the narrative, participants recognize the presence of Jesus through the experience of certain common meals: After the bread is broken, the presence of and truth about Jesus, which were always a reality, seem to become clearer to those who partake.

The feeding of the five thousand in Luke 9:10–17 is a model for such meals. The pericope is immediately preceded by a passage in which Herod himself questions Jesus' identity. Herod has heard stories about Jesus. The disciples seem to have some knowledge of the same stories in 9:18. Much confusion surrounded Jesus' identity. Some claimed he was John the Baptist raised from the dead. Others theorized that prophecies concerning the return of Elijah had been fulfilled. Still others surmised that an ancient prophet had been brought back to life. Having beheaded the Baptist, Herod had eliminated in his own mind one of the theories being offered. The scene Luke describes is one of a public groping with the identity of a man who suddenly casts out demons, heals the sick, and preaches good news of the kingdom of God. Jesus' identity has become an important issue in the minds of the people and their king.

The feeding of the five thousand follows immediately, in some ways a response to Herod's curiosity. The Lukan story follows the Markan account in many respects. There are a few distinguishing elements of the Lukan story. Luke alone places this account in Bethsaida. It is interesting to note that Jesus pronounces a woe on Bethsaida in 10:13, claiming Tyre and Sidon would have come to repentance had they witnessed the mighty works done in Bethsaida. The proximity to the feeding passage leads one to believe this is a reference to it. In other words, this meal *should have clarified Jesus' identity* for those who participated in it. This is the very point Luke is trying to make in the feeding story.

Luke follows Mark in beginning the story with a short retreat for the disciples, who have just returned from a missionary journey. Matthew has Jesus withdraw out of fear of Herod. Luke alone includes Jesus' healing and preaching about the kingdom. Luke is careful to place this story squarely in the context of Jesus' ongoing ministry activity.

Beyond these unique aspects, Luke changes little from the Markan text besides word order. The disciples feel they can feed the crowd only if they

can buy more food. Jesus takes the five loaves and two fish and asks the disciples to seat the crowd. He blesses and breaks the bread and passes the food out to the disciples. Luke's version follows the Markan version very closely in the critical verbs of this passage in verse 16: λαβὼν (took); εὐλόγησεν (blessed); κατέκλασεν (broke). Matthew matches Luke on the first two words mentioned, but has κλάσαζ in the third instance. This may have been the way meals were typically started in Palestine at this time. There is no doubt that these words carried no special *symbolic* meaning in and of themselves to Luke. Later we will see how other meals that do not bear the same meaning as this one, and the Eucharist scene in chapter 22 still uses these same words. The meaning that sets these meals apart is the experience of Jesus' presence and, at least in Luke, a clearer sense of his identity. John Paul Heil notes that as the disciples watched Jesus feed the crowd with a small amount of food in this way they would have been reminded of the stories in 1 Kings 17:7–16 and 2 Kings 4:42–44, where Elijah and Elisha also multiplied food in a similar manner. The fact that five thousand people were fed in this instance would lead the disciples to believe that someone even greater than Elijah was with them.³ Whether the disciples actually recalled the stories of Elijah and Elisha or not, the question is whether the readers of the gospels would have recalled the stories. Some observers believe this was the case.

The argument being set forth in this study is that the miracle in this pericope is not for those who ate the food, but for the disciples. This passage is immediately followed by verses 18–22, in which Jesus asks the disciples about his identity. After the disciples tell Jesus what others have said, Peter confesses his conviction that Jesus is the Messiah. Peter must be saying this on behalf of the rest of the disciples because Jesus orders all of them not to reveal this truth to anyone. He goes on to further clarify his identity as the Messiah by saying that the Messiah must suffer, die, and be raised from the dead. The implication is that the Messiah must suffer, die, and be raised because the Scriptures foretold it. This is the first time in the gospel where the disciples have a moment of clarity concerning Jesus' identity. I. Howard Marshall notes of the preceding feeding pericope: "In its context in Luke, it prepares for the confession scene which follows, and constitutes a decisive revelation of Jesus to the disciples."⁴ Richard J. Dillon notes this arrangement of meal and passion prediction,

³ Ibid., 63

⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke, A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1978), 357.

saying the feeding is Jesus' way of "sharing his mission and destiny with them."⁵ Robert C. Tannehill affirms this analysis of the author's purpose by saying that this is a very suitable place for the author to show the point where the disciples recognized Jesus as Messiah.⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer agrees: "[T]he multiplication of the loaves and fish in this Lukan context prepares for the admission Peter is to make about Jesus."⁷ By juxtaposing these two pericopes, Luke makes the following point: Jesus is known to his disciples as the Messiah in the sharing of a common meal.

Some observers argue that according to the narrative, this meal is a holy meal, an early version of the Eucharist Jesus later formalized in chapter 22. For the purposes of this paper, the term "Eucharist" or "Eucharistic" refers to a meal consisting of bread and a cup, celebrated by the community of Jesus' followers, where the elements have a symbolic/sacramental value as the body and blood of Jesus. The community celebrates this meal as a remembrance of Jesus. Eugene LaVerdiere argues that the ten meals Jesus participates in during his ministry in Luke represent the "unfolding" of the Eucharist. Each meal seems to accentuate a different facet of meaning for the Eucharist.⁸ LaVerdiere assigns a variety of meal settings to a similar purpose, something Luke probably did not intend. Fitzmyer supports LaVerdiere's argument, adding, "The use of the Eucharistic formulae in the feeding accounts starts a trajectory of Christian interpretation in which the Eucharist is being prefigured."⁹ The diversity of settings seems to argue against his view. Andrew McGowan points out an implicit assumption in LaVerdiere's argument: that the Eucharist "was a fixed pattern of celebration basically comparable to contemporary Catholic liturgy."¹⁰ McGowan contends that such a pattern cannot be demonstrated from Luke-Acts itself or within the Lukan community.

Jesus was not instituting a holy meal. This did not happen in the context of the Passover. It was a common meal involving the staples of the diet typical to first-century Jews. A similar argument could be made

⁵ Richard J. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word: Tradition and Composition in Luke 24* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 197.

⁶ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 1, *The Gospel According to Luke*, ed. Robert W. Funk (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 219.

⁷ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 764.

⁸ LaVerdiere, *Eucharist*, 83.

⁹ Fitzmyer, *Gospel*, 764.

¹⁰ Andrew McGowan, "The Breaking of the Bread: The Development of the Eucharist According to the Acts of the Apostles: A Review Article" (review of Eugene LaVerdiere, *Breaking of the Bread*), *Worship* 73 (1999): 474.

concerning the Eucharist in chapter 22, but the food in that instance had clear religious overtones, being elements of the Passover meal. In addition, the Eucharist in chapter 22 seems to envelop the actual Passover meal, whereas the feeding of the five thousand is the meal. The only similarities seem to be the blessing, breaking, and passing out of bread, and even those have striking dissimilarities, as we will see. The point of the Eucharist in chapter 22 seems to be the remembrance of Jesus. The point in the narrative of the feeding of the five thousand is to clarify for the disciples Jesus' identity as Messiah. More will be said concerning the difference between the two meals next.

The Experience of Jesus' Presence in the Eucharist of Luke 22

The Passover meal depicted in Luke 22:15–20 has significant verbal similarities to the feeding of the five thousand in chapter 9. This is one of the main reasons scholars have often concluded that the feeding of the five thousand is Eucharistic in nature. Jesus “took” (λαβὼν) bread and “gave” (ἔδωκεν) it to the disciples. However, the differences greatly outweigh the similarities between the two stories. In 22:19, Jesus asks his disciples to remember him through this sacrament. In chapter 9, he performs the miracle to help his disciples recognize him, which he also does in the Emmaus pericope. In chapter 9, Jesus has the disciples pass out food in a meal that holds absolutely no religious meaning to the crowd; in chapter 22 Jesus feeds the disciples in a meal that had both historical meaning and would come to have sacramental meaning for the early Church. In chapter 9 Jesus passes out fish; in chapter 22 he gives new meaning to the third cup of the Passover meal. While the fish may have been a classical symbol of the Eucharist, there are few observers who feel a Eucharistic tradition with fish is the basis for the feeding of the five thousand or the meal with the eleven disciples in Luke 24.

At best, one meal alludes to the other. Since the feeding of the five thousand comes earlier, it is much easier to understand the Last Supper as an allusion to it, rather than the other way around. One could argue that the feeding of the five thousand is a foreshadowing of the Eucharist. However, this paper will argue that it more likely foreshadows the meal stories in chapter 24. John Nolland cuts to the heart of the meaning of this meal for Luke by showing that the image of body and blood independently point to Jesus' coming death.¹¹ Nolland follows the logic of Heinz Schürmann, who claims that since the meal separated the bread and

¹¹ John Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 1053.

the cup, Luke did not intend the reader to interpret them as interrelated.¹² Marshall finds this argument lacking, saying that if the gospel narrative presents them as part of a meal, then the “early Church regarded ‘body and blood’ as a pair and understood the two sayings in light of each other.”¹³ Marshall is right on this point, at least in speaking about chapter 22. Nevertheless, between the gospel and the second chapter of Acts, Luke presents the reader with four different yet related meals, each with tremendous theological significance for the identity of Jesus, where bread is explicitly broken. Only one explicitly mentions a cup, and two others explicitly mention fish. The point is, the breaking of bread is much larger for the narrative than its context in Luke 22:19. It is much more plausible to understand Luke incorporating the breaking of bread in the Passover/Last Supper tradition than it is to understand those four meals as Eucharistic. If this is true, the feeding of the five thousand is not meant to be Eucharistic. It is very plausible to assert that the Eucharist story in Luke incorporated the breaking of the bread from Luke 9:16, then added the element of wine from the Passover tradition. Indeed, as David Brown states, “he deliberately adopted the customary breaking of the loaf as a foretelling of the judgment and deliverance soon to come.”¹⁴ It would be much more awkward to explain how the feeding in 9:16 was an echo of a story that comes toward the end of the gospel, and that it does away with part of the Eucharistic meal, substituting fish in its place.

Another way of understanding this meal in the context of the narrative is as a replacement for sacrifices offered in the temple. Bruce Chilton argues that Jesus’ entry into the temple, which was undoubtedly for the purposes of purification, was unsuccessful. Chilton compares Jesus to other groups like the Essenes and some Pharisaical groups who saw the temple cult as irreversibly corrupted under the leadership of that time.¹⁵ Sacrifices were not acceptable to God when offered in an impure environment. Thus, in the synoptics, the Eucharist is symbolic of the sacrifices no longer offered there. The wine represents the blood poured from the animal, and the flesh is represented by the bread, which was divided at the time of sacrifice.¹⁶ How Jesus identifies this sacrifice with himself in Luke is another matter. Chilton says the commandment to remember Jesus through the

¹² Heinz Schürmann, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den synoptischen Evangelien; Beiträge* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1968), 107.

¹³ Marshall, *Greek*, 803.

¹⁴ David Brown, “Breaking of the Bread,” *Theology* 75 (1972): 480.

¹⁵ Bruce Chilton, *A Feast of Meanings: Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus through Johanne Circles* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 70.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

meal in verse 19 is a further theological development by the early Church. He states that in the earliest form, which exists in Jesus identifying the wine and bread as blood and body, the sacrifices one gives to God are meant. In this scenario, Jesus has taken the place of the temple. The only appropriate place to offer symbolic sacrifices to God is in the Eucharistic meal.¹⁷

Few will argue against the existence of more than one level of tradition in the Lukan version of the Last Supper. If so, then one could easily connect the nature of the early tradition described by Chilton, apart from significant Eucharistic reinterpretation, with the feeding of the five thousand and the common meals of the early Church described in Acts 2.

Two important narrative questions must be addressed at this point. First, if Jesus had replaced the temple by the time of the Last Supper, what was his relationship to it at the feeding of the five thousand? How are the two meals related? Again, if the feeding of the five thousand is the paradigm for meals in Luke-Acts, then his presence as a replacement for the temple builds on the meaning of his presence in the breaking of bread in chapter 9. It is a further development of that theme. The addition of Eucharistic phrases in 22:19 does not alter this development.

Second, if Jesus replaces the temple for the disciples, why are they found in the temple on a daily basis in Acts 2? One must keep in mind that the temple remained an important place of ministry for the Church in Acts 2. If Jesus considered the temple impure, it would make sense that his followers would continue his efforts to purify the temple. A possible extension of this effort to avoid participating in the cultic activity of an impure temple may have been the common meal they enjoyed. This meal, which consisted of the broken bread and possibly the cup, could easily be understood as an alternative to the sacrifices offered by faithful Jews outside the Church.

Some note must also be made of the textual variants in this passage. All extant Greek manuscripts except D have the “longer” reading, which includes verses 19b–20. The sequence of the meal in those manuscripts is cup–bread–cup. Manuscript D and others have a “shorter” version in which verses 19b–20 are lacking. In those versions, the Eucharist simply consists of the cup. Some observers hold that the shorter version of the text is most original to Luke because shorter readings are generally favored in New Testament scholarship, and because there is a telltale level of agreement between verses 19b–20 and 1 Corinthians 11:24b–25.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁸ Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: American Bible Society, 1994), 150.

This would suggest that verses 19b–20 is an interpolation by an editor who wanted to preserve the Pauline formula for the Last Supper in this passage. However, a greater number of observers feel that similarities between verses 19b–20 can be explained when one considers the author’s familiarity with the Pauline formula. The wide variety of manuscripts containing verses 19b–20 also argues in favor of the “longer” version.¹⁹

Brown says Jesus intended to reassure his disciples of the divine purpose present in his impending demise.²⁰ The repetition of this meal was to remind them of the saving effect his death had on those who follow him. Brown says, “They were able to associate the bread and wine with him because in some way which they did not then fully understand, their breaking and pouring represented actions which he said he would suffer on their behalf.”²¹

LaVerdiere notes that Luke has Jesus take this opportunity to address the economic chasm between the rich and the poor.²² This almost certainly did not pertain to the situation of the disciples at the time, for in the narrative they had left everything to follow Jesus. LaVerdiere also notes the way Luke gave a universal meaning to a meal clearly meant for the disciples by associating it with a new covenant based on Jesus’ sacrifice of himself.²³ Whether or not one agrees with LaVerdiere’s understanding, he points to a significant aspect of this meal for Luke: It is a farewell discourse, and the teachings, along with the meal, are meant to embody the presence of Jesus after he is gone.

Resurrection Meals of Presence

The Meal at Emmaus

While LaVerdiere argues that all the meals in Luke are Eucharistic in nature, the only meal Jesus explicitly gives such meaning is the Last Supper in chapter 22. The other place in Luke where Jesus’ presence is known to his disciples during the breaking of bread and fish is in the Resurrection appearances to the disciples in Emmaus and Jerusalem in chapter 24. The part of this story pertaining to this study revolves around the language used concerning the bread. Despite having walked with Jesus the distance from Jerusalem, and despite his explanation of the scriptural evidence that

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Brown, “Bread,” 480.

²¹ Ibid., 482.

²² LaVerdiere, *Eucharist*, 85.

²³ Ibid. 91.

²⁴ Robert Karris, “Luke 24:13–35,” *Interpretation* 41 (1987): 57–61.

the Messiah should have suffered, died, and returned from the dead, the disciples fail to recognize Jesus. Again, his identity is the issue.

The disciples do not recognize Jesus until he breaks the bread and passes it out to them. After that, his identity becomes instantly clear. The disciples are surprised that they did not recognize him sooner. This is a clear continuation of the pattern established in the feeding of the five thousand: Jesus breaks bread and fish, passes them out, and his identity becomes clear to his disciples. Robert Karris notes, “they recognize Jesus because he shares food with them.”²⁴ The argument against this view is that no fish are involved in the Emmaus story. However, the author undoubtedly intended to link this story with the appearance to follow, a story where fish are involved.

William S. Kurz notes the clear double entendre present in this passage, pointing out that both the Eucharist and his ongoing presence are at issue here.²⁵ This view is supported by Nolland, who notes that the language in 24:30 is much more similar to 9:15–16 than it is to 22:19. However, Nolland claims that 9:16 was intended to “evoke” thought of the Eucharist in 22:19. For that reason, Nolland warns against drawing too strong of a “distinction” between the two passages.²⁶ Nolland does not mean, however, that the Emmaus meal is a Eucharist; “rather, Luke wants to make the point that the Christians of his day were able to have the living Lord made known to them in the Eucharistic celebration in a manner that was at least analogous to the experience of the Emmaus disciples.”²⁷ The point for the disciples at Emmaus is that Jesus’ identity is known in the breaking of the bread, which is an echo of the Eucharist. Marshall agrees with this assessment, adding, “It was because Jesus had appeared at meal times that the Church expected his presence at the Lord’s Supper.”²⁸ Hans Deiter Betz concurs, stating that the “common meal is elevated to such an extent that it is thought of as the principle occasion where the resurrected Jesus becomes manifest.”²⁹

Some scholars have proposed that the disciples recognized Jesus because of a particular manner in which Jesus broke the bread. Georges Gander proposes that Jesus had broken bread in a signature way even before the Last Supper, and that the disciples recognized his distinct

²⁵ William S. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 71.

²⁶ Nolland, *Luke*, 1206.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Marshall, *Greek*, 898.

²⁹ Hans Deiter Betz, “The Origin and Nature of Christian Faith according to the Emmaus Legend,” *Interpretation* 23 (1969): 32–46.

method.³⁰ This is not altogether implausible. Yet it is difficult to reconcile this claim with the fact that Jesus was recognized in the next pericope as he ate fish, something he himself had not broken.

Alfred Plummer also notes a difference in the verb tenses used in the Eucharist pericope and the other meals mentioned so far. In 9:16, the breaking and passing out of the bread is described with *κατέκλασεν* and *ἔδίδου*, verbs in the aorist and imperfect tense, respectively. This gives one the image of Jesus repeatedly giving bread in the scene. This shift from the aorist to the imperfect is also present in 24:30, where the author uses *κλάσαζ ἔπεδίδου*. Plummer notes that neither the gospels nor Paul employ the imperfect when speaking about Jesus passing out the bread in the Eucharist passages.³¹ On this basis, Plummer also regards the Emmaus meal as not Eucharistic in nature.

C. F. Evans raises other questions about associating this meal too strongly with the Eucharist. He notes that the two disciples in this story were not present at the Last Supper. If, in the narrative, this meal was meant to evoke images of the Last Supper in the minds of these two disciples, they could have only understood those images secondhand from accounts they heard over the weekend from the eleven.³² This is an unlikely scenario.

In summary, the meal with the disciples at Emmaus followed the pattern clearly demonstrated in the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus' identity as Messiah was recognized in the breaking and distribution of food. While this passage had clear echoes of the Eucharist meal instituted in chapter 22, it is not a Eucharist meal in itself. Rather, it is because Jesus' presence was recognized in community meals that the disciples expected to experience his presence in the Eucharist.

The Other Half of the Emmaus Appearance

There is very little doubt among scholars that the appearance of Jesus at Emmaus and his appearance to the disciples in the next passages are to be read as one story. As the disciples from Emmaus are reporting their experience to the eleven, Jesus appears in their midst. There is no break between these stories, though one appears in many translations. If so, then one can argue that the meal that helps Jesus' disciples recognize his identity is only half over. The second course is about to begin.

³⁰ Georges Gander, *L'Evangile pour les étrangers du monde: commentaire de l'Evangile selon Luc* (Lausanne: s.n., 1986), 1021.

³¹ Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1922), 551.

³² C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London: SCM, 1990), 913.

When he appears, the disciples' first inclination is that his ghost has appeared to them. Though Jesus quickly attempts to put that theory to rest, showing them his hands and feet, they remain in a state of disbelief (*ἀπιστούτων*; 24:41). He asks for something to eat, and the disciples supply him with the other half of the meal, which helped them to recognize him in chapter 9: a piece of fish. After this point, Jesus explains to them why it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die, and so on. At this point Jesus makes a statement about the role of the Messiah. He had already established his identity when he participated in their communal meal.

Many commentators draw a distinction between the Emmaus meal and the meal with the eleven. Most recognize a connection between this passage and the appearance of Jesus with bread and fish at the shore in John 21. There is almost a consensus that these two passages reflect an older tradition that Luke and John have alluded to in these two appearances. This part of the story, along with the Emmaus story, is a Lukan formulation, building on the tradition used by Luke and John. No mention of fish occurs in the resurrection appearances of Matthew. In John 21:13, Jesus is the host who passes out the fish. In Luke he receives it. Furthermore, in Ignatius's *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, the Lukan phrase "For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (3:21) appears without any reference to the fish.

Some wonder if this earlier tradition was Eucharistic in nature.³³ John Dominic Crossan argues this is an early form of the Eucharist, a meal where Jesus assumes the role of both the master who blesses the bread (at Emmaus) and the servant who distributes it.³⁴ Crossan also says the meaning of this meal evolved from a "postresurrectional confession of Jesus' continued presence at the ritualized meals of the believing community" to a Eucharist for Church leadership.³⁵ One could question his use of "Eucharist" for both the meal in chapter 22 and this meal in chapter 24. Crossan does not explain how the meal in chapter 24 is "Eucharistic" besides noting the textual similarities between the two stories that have been noted above. However, characterizing this meal as "Eucharistic" is problematic. No words of the institution appear, there is no bread or cup, and the meal involves an experience of Jesus' immediate presence, not a remembrance of him.

Crossan also distinguishes Jesus' eating of the fish from the breaking of the bread by pointing out the transfer of roles from host to guest.³⁶ Dillon

³³ Marshall, *Greek*, 903.

³⁴ John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 402.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 404.

agrees, pointing out that this meal establishes continuity between the many meal stories in Luke where he is a guest for a meal.³⁷ Dillon contrasts this meal with the meals where Jesus breaks bread with the disciples and passes it out. His view is preferable. Crossan overlooks that in Emmaus, where the two disciples host a meal in the place where they were staying, Jesus is their guest, though they travel along together. Moreover, in the eating of the fish, the disciples again supply him with fish. It is a communal meal the disciples have enjoyed in which he is their guest, and during which his identity is recognized. Even Marshall, who denies the connection between this meal and the feeding of the five thousand, admits that the purpose of this meal for Luke is “to stress the reality of his presence with them.”³⁸ His presence would be irrelevant if his identity were unclear to his disciples.

He is not a normal guest, nevertheless. As in many other meals depicted by Luke, Jesus is an honored guest. How else could one imagine the people would receive him when they consider him to be John the Baptist or Elijah or Moses, or one of the prophets raised from the dead? In modern culture, he is like the visiting priest who is invited to a meal and asked to pray a blessing on the food. Crossan also claims Jesus has turned the idea of an honored guest on its head.³⁹ While Crossan maintains that the one who blesses and breaks the bread is usually the master or host, he recognizes that Jesus, who would have sat in a place of honor, as a master or an honored guest, performs the duty usually reserved for a servant, a housewife, or someone in a less honored place at the table. He states, “Far from reclining and being served, Jesus himself serves the meal, serves, like any housewife, the same meal to all including himself.”⁴⁰ Crossan’s argument does not allow for the very common practice by hosts in first-century Palestine to parcel out food to the guests in a manner of their choosing. Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh cite many instances in Greco-Roman literature where a host is depicted doling out food to guests in a manner corresponding to their social status.⁴¹ As a host, Jesus goes against the common practice and hands the same meal to each guest. In this instance, he does none of those things. Crossan’s claim that Jesus challenged the culturally conditioned roles of guest-host is not founded, at least in this instance. Jesus was a guest when he ate fish with the eleven disciples in Luke 24. This is one more reason

³⁷ Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 291.

³⁸ Marshall, *Greek*, 903.

³⁹ Crossan, *Historical*, 404.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 368.

why it should not be disconnected from the meal at Emmaus, where he did break the bread as an honored guest.

One last point should be noted here. There seems to be a transition from the Lukan meal stories of Jesus' presence to a meal story of joy and teaching in Acts. An emphasis on experiencing the bodily presence of Jesus and recognizing his identity in the breaking of bread is transformed into a continued experience of the joy of Jesus' presence through fellowship with his apostles. Just as the disciples find joy in their disbelief (24:41) in this pericope, the early Church ἀγαλλιᾷσει "rejoices exceedingly" in the community meal (Acts 2:46). In the following discussion of the pericope from Acts, a link will be proposed with the meal stories in Luke. The story in Luke 24 of Jesus' appearance to the eleven disciples is the pivotal meal in that the joy of the bodily presence of Jesus gives way to joy of his continued presence through the ongoing work of God in the community through the apostles.

In summary, the narrative treats the story of Jesus' disciples eating a common meal with him after his death as a powerful experience of his presence, a time when his identity became clear. For this reason, Luke juxtaposes the touching of his hands and the eating of the fish. Special prominence is attributed by Peter in Acts 10:41 to the strength of the witness given by those who were privileged by God to share this meal with Jesus. Those who ate with him identified him clearly as the Lord they had known before his death, and they experienced his presence among them in the common meal. The relationship of this passage to the feeding of the five thousand takes on a new meaning for the narrative when viewed in this light.

Meals of Jesus' Presence in Acts

The pattern of meals in which the apostles experience Jesus' presence continues in the book of Acts, though, as stated before, some shifts appear. Heil notes, "The reference to the communal meals of the Jerusalem believers as 'the breaking of the bread' means that they are continuing the special meal fellowship Jesus modeled for them by his own breaking of the bread."⁴² The bodily presence of Jesus is no longer an issue because he has ascended to heaven. Recognition of his identity is no longer an issue because Jesus rose from the dead in Luke and opened up the minds of the disciples to understand his identity in a way that was impossible up to that point. The preaching of the disciples in Acts demonstrates the apostles' very clear understanding of Jesus' identity.

⁴² Heil, *Meal Stories*, 237.

Though these two issues have become less of a concern in Acts, the emerging Church continues to experience his presence in communal meals. While evidence of this continuity is not easily identified as in Luke, it does exist. The key to understanding the narrative link between the meal passages in Luke and the passage in Acts is in the emotion of those dining. In Acts 2:46, a related meal story appears in which the Church senses a joy similar to that experienced by the eleven disciples when Jesus appeared to them in Luke 24. Though different words are used in these two passages to express this happiness, nevertheless the ideas are very similar. In addition, the words used to describe the breaking of the bread are very similar to the words used in the feeding of the five thousand and other Lukan passages. A more detailed look at this related meal story in Acts will clarify this point.

Community Meals in the Early Church

The portrait Luke paints of the early Church is one of community and wonder. The teaching ministry of Jesus continues through the teaching of the apostles. Equally as narrated is the experience of the communal meal in which the joy of Jesus' presence is felt in the breaking of bread. The Church breaks bread *κατ' οἶκον*, "at home," an experience that made them *ἀγαλλιάσει*, "rejoice exceedingly" (Acts 2:46). As mentioned above, the link to the passage with the eleven disciples in Luke 24 is the similar feeling of joy the disciples had when Jesus was present in body. For Heil, the joyful experience of common meals by the early Church celebrated the resumption of the table fellowship when Jesus appeared and ate with the disciples in Luke 24.⁴³ The Church continued to experience that presence and joy not only in the teaching and wonders performed by the apostles, but also in the breaking of bread in each others' homes.

The language used in this story is similar to that used in the feeding of the five thousand. The breaking of the bread in 2:42 is *κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου*, which is the exact phrase used in Luke 24:35 when Jesus broke bread in Emmaus. The verb is the same in Acts 2:46, though the sentence structure requires the present active participle *κλώντέζ*.

In addition to the parallel in language described above, this story also parallels the joy (*χαρᾶς*) experienced by the disciples in Luke 24:41. The word used in Acts 2:46 to describe this joy is *ἀγαλλιάσει*. Kurz is one of the few scholars who makes note of this phrase, labeling it a "fruit of the Spirit."⁴⁴ Although the two words are different, the similarity of the emotions they express is too strong to overlook.

⁴³ Ibid., 243.

⁴⁴ William S. Kurz, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1983), 27.

Again, this meal is not to be confused with the Eucharist, though it does share the common element of disciples breaking bread. C. K. Barrett emphasizes that these were common meals with simple elements from everyday life, not symbolic, as the Eucharist clearly was.⁴⁵ But Barrett sees the “rejoicing” of the early Church in this verse as “eschatological; salvation was at hand.”⁴⁶ Johannes Munck concurs, adding that these meals “are only for the baptized.”⁴⁷ David John Williams distinguishes between the mention of “the bread” in 2:42 and “bread” without the definite article in 2:46.⁴⁸ Williams suggests that 2:42 refers to the Eucharist because of the definite article τοῦ. Williams agrees with Barrett that the meal in 2:46 is a common meal enjoyed by the Church. It is to be distinguished from the meal described in 2:42.⁴⁹ F. F. Bruce also identifies the meal mentioned in 2:42 as Eucharistic in nature.⁵⁰ Bruce seems to make no distinction between the meals in 2:42 and the meals in 2:46. Though he acknowledges that the meals in 2:46 occur in the homes of the people of the early Church, Bruce seems to indicate that the meals in 2:42 became impractical in the temple, and the Eucharistic meals were transferred to the homes of the believers.⁵¹ LaVerdiere agrees, claiming that every meal in Luke-Acts where bread is broken has been transformed into a meal associated with the Eucharist.⁵² That view is not held by Williams or Barrett, both of whom see the meals in 2:46 as non-symbolic in nature.

Hans Conzelmann bridges the gap between these two positions by saying that although Luke means to describe “ordinary” meals in these instances, he does not make a distinction between the common meals and the Eucharistic meals, which the Church certainly celebrated with regularity.⁵³ If this is so, then the joy the early Church experienced in the ongoing presence of Jesus through the community and apostolic ministry at both these meals corresponds to the joy felt by the disciples at the meal stories in Luke 24. LaVerdiere comments, “This was not just the breaking and sharing of bread, but Jesus’ breaking of bread and Jesus’ sharing

⁴⁵ C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Shorter Commentary* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2002), 35.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 22.

⁴⁸ John David Williams, *Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 60.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵⁰ F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 132.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁵² LaVerdiere, *Eucharist*, 104.

⁵³ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James A. Limburg, Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 23.

of it as an expression of his person.”⁵⁴ Though Jesus is no longer present in body, his presence is still experienced through these meals and continues to bring joy to the Church.

In summary, the meals described in Acts 2:42 and 2:46 are difficult to distinguish from one another, whether one is Eucharistic in nature as opposed to the other. What is clear is that in the narrative the early Church continued to experience the joy of the presence of Jesus in these meals, a joy the disciples felt upon seeing his resurrected body. Strong similarities have been demonstrated between the words used to describe these meals and the words used to describe the meal at Emmaus. Indeed, Tannehill remarks, “The presence of the risen Christ at Emmaus may also suggest that the meals in Acts go beyond fellowship among believers to include communion with the risen Lord.”⁵⁵ This paper has argued that such a relationship is more than suggested by the narrative. Although his physical presence is but a memory at this point, the meals enjoyed by the early Church helped them remember and experience that presence in a new way through the ongoing ministry of the apostles and the fellowship enjoyed by the believers.

Other Unrelated Meal Stories

There are two other meal stories in Acts that follow a word structure similar to that found in the stories discussed so far in this paper. One is an account of a communal meal with Paul and a group of believers in Troas (20:11). This account is of a normal meal that would be eaten, not one imbued with the kind of special significance inherent in the stories described above. Any special sense of Jesus’ presence in this passage would be related to Paul’s apparent healing of Eutychus, an event somewhat reminiscent of the raising of Jairus’s daughter in Luke 8. The second is a meal Paul shared on the ship during his perilous trip to Rome. Though the breaking and blessing of bread are described in familiar words, this was a meal shared mostly with unconverted Roman soldiers and sailors. The occasion has little or no relation to the passages that have been discussed. What can be said about both these meals, though, is that, like the other meals mentioned in this paper, they allude to the Last Supper. The verbal agreement in the breaking of bread, and the fact that there are parallels between Paul’s life and the life of Jesus in Luke should not be overlooked.

⁵⁴ LaVerdiere, *Eucharist*, 104.

⁵⁵ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 290.

Conclusion

In summary, a consistent pattern beginning with the feeding of the five thousand and on through the meals of the early Church in Acts 2 has been proposed. The point of breaking the bread in Luke 9 was to reveal Jesus' identity to the disciples so that they, unlike Herod and the rest of the Jews, would know the Messiah was present with them. The community remembered Jesus' ongoing presence and identity as one who died and rose again in their repeated celebration of the Eucharist. The breaking of bread present in other meals was associated with the Last Supper/Passover meal Jesus celebrated with his disciples before his death. A two-stage repetition of the breaking of the bread in Luke 9 occurs in Luke 24, where Jesus' presence is recognized both in the breaking of the bread and in a meal of fish. The early Church is reminded of Jesus' ongoing presence in their community as they ate and enjoyed fellowship over common meals in each others' homes and in the observance of the Eucharist. The joy of the early Church reflects the joy of the disciples as they realize Jesus is present in body with them three days after his death. While this paper certainly challenges some trends in recent scholarship concerning the Eucharist, it gives a much more plausible argument for understanding the breaking of the bread in Luke 9 as the prototype for the meals of presence enjoyed by Jesus' disciples in his life, death, resurrection, and the beginnings of the Church. N V

Thomas Aquinas and the Need for a Contemporary Theological Cosmology

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FORTY YEARS after the Second Vatican Council addressed the problem, modern atheism, whether in the form of ideological rejection or practical indifference, continues to be a prevalent feature of contemporary life in the Western world. As the council recognized, there are a number of reasons why an atheistic secularism permeates modern culture, but one important contributing cause that I wish to address in this paper is the flat or closed worldview that, intentionally or not, has come out of modern science.¹ The presumption of the modern mind to reduce reality to the observable world deserves special attention because it vitiates the particular approach the council adopted to evangelize the modern world, and because it has yet to be sufficiently overcome by the dialogue between science and theology promoted by the Church. Indeed, as I will argue, the genuinely Christian view of created reality that should be the fruit of this dialogue has failed to fully ripen because of some of the common approaches taken by theologians engaged in it. Our need is for a properly theological understanding of the cosmos, a worldview that while open to the scientific understanding of nature, dares to transcend it. In the first half of this paper, after explaining

¹ *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, in *Vatican Council II*, vol. 1, *The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, rev. ed., ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1996), 903ff. Cf. nos. 19–21 for the council’s discussion of the various kinds and causes of atheism. The council fathers briefly mention only “scientism” as a contributing factor to the rise of modern atheism: “Many, unduly transgressing the limits of the positive sciences, contend that everything can be explained by this kind of scientific reasoning alone.” *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 19.

what a theological cosmology entails, I will give the reasons why the very active dialogue between theology and science has yet to produce it. In the second half, I give three reasons why the thought of Thomas Aquinas offers us resources to promote a truly theological understanding of the cosmos. Although there are philosophical considerations at stake, the primary issue is giving expression to a theological understanding of reality in light of its relation to God as the origin and end of all, an understanding missing from many scientific theologies even as it is at the heart of Thomas's own.

Reading the Signs of the Times

As a way to evangelize the modern world, the Church in *Gaudium et Spes* offered a theological anthropology of the dignity and destiny of the human person in the light of reason and revelation.² Yet without a theological cosmology to frame this theological anthropology, any invitation to consider the question of man in view of the mystery of God will lack intellectual coherence. For unless an understanding of the foundation and purpose of the created cosmos, also as known by reason and faith, challenges the modern mind to think otherwise, it will persist in assuming that all reality is self-given and self-determining, needing no transcendent referent for it to be adequately grounded and properly ordered. Lacking a way to intelligibly relate the things in this world to God, the modern mind reduces the realms of nature and human culture to a self-contained horizon, wherein being is restricted to matter and energy, truth to scientific demonstration, and the good to what benefits earthly existence. This collapse of reality into a cosmological solipsism fundamentally undermines the pastoral effort of the Church to present a theological anthropology to the world, because a transcendent understanding of *anything* has been ruled out of court. When the world is viewed as closed in on itself, discourse on the fundamental human openness to God makes little sense.

Since it is modern science that has reconfigured our understanding of the cosmos, a theological cosmology that is meant to challenge and replace its atheistic counterpart must be able to integrate the understanding of natural processes achieved by the modern sciences. Yet as a *theological* cosmology, this worldview must transcend the limits of scientific methodology and be founded upon the truth of divine revelation. What a theological cosmology can provide is an intellectually cogent understanding of how God's presence and action underlies and permeates all that is and all that occurs, thereby helping to renew in a scientific age the 'theonomous' sense of nature.³ A

² *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 11–39.

³ See Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ* (New York: Crossroads, 1999), 16–26.

theological cosmology expresses the truth that all reality is created, sustained, and governed by God. It also explains how necessary it is to view the universe in reference to its transcendent origin and destiny in order to properly understand the intrinsic order that unites its grand diversity of beings. A theological cosmology shows how Christian doctrine supports the worldview of modern science, yet takes that worldview and places it in a theological context of greater intelligibility, one that alleviates science of its barren attempts to explain reality strictly according to the causes it can delineate. Expounding the implications of the doctrine of creation, theology's account of our cosmos gives expression to God's active immanence in creation in a manner that neither compromises divine transcendence nor the genuine integrity of natural causality explained by modern science.

It is incumbent of theology that it engage in critical dialogue with contemporary science in order to develop this contemporary theological cosmology. According to Alister McGrath, "a positive working relationship between Christian theology and the natural science is demanded by the Christian understanding of the nature of reality itself—an understanding grounded in the doctrine of creation."⁴ In welcoming and fostering this engagement, the Church remains true to its traditional teaching that faith and reason are not adversarial but complementary. In his 1988 address to the Vatican Observatory, Pope John Paul II clarified how this dialogue should seek a more comprehensive understanding of the world that incorporates the contributions of both disciplines.⁵ So many thinkers from both fields have labored for a more constructive conversation between science and theology that it has become one of the most popular and well-funded areas of interdisciplinary studies. Moreover, the discoveries and developments of twentieth-century physics have raised deeper questions about the universe as a whole, reinvigorating the field of cosmology.⁶

⁴ Alister E. McGrath, *A Scientific Theology*, vol. 1, *Nature* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 21.

⁵ Pope John Paul II, "Address at the Vatican Observatory, June 1, 1988," in *John Paul II on Science and Religion: Reflections on the New View from Rome*, ed. Robert Russell, William R. Stoeger, and George V. Coyne (Vatican Observatory Publications, 1990), M1–M14; also in print as "A Dynamic Relationship of Theology and Science," *Origins* 18 (November 17, 1988): 375–78.

⁶ For example, physics has raised the question of why the universe has the precise mathematical exactness in its physical laws that collectively support the development of life and mind—that is, the "anthropic principle." Cf. J. D. Barrow and F. J. Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 115–64.

Encouragement from the Church, intense interest from the academy, a new openness from the domain of science—one would expect that with such favorable conditions much has been accomplished to produce a genuine theological cosmology, and yet, regrettably this is not the case. Theologians *have* criticized the reductionism and materialism infecting scientific thinking, rightly separating the method and conclusions of science from false and unnecessary philosophies that foster the modern myth of a fundamental conflict existing between scientific truth and religious faith. Nevertheless, the theological effort to engage the modern scientific understanding of the world has often been willing to refashion Christian teaching to fit the findings and thought categories of science, rather than incorporate the scientific worldview into a more extensive understanding of reality based upon the distinctively theological data of revelation. Dialogue has been pursued with great interest, just not for the proper goal.

In the dialogue between religion and science, the majority of theologians have sought to develop a *theology of nature* rather than the traditional *natural theology* (rational evidence of God's existence and action in the world).⁷ This theology of nature involves the integration or systematic synthesis of religious truth and scientific discovery, finding "consonances" that demonstrate the positive relation between them.⁸ According to Ian

⁷ See Christopher Southgate et al., *God, Humanity, and the Cosmos: A Textbook in Science and Religion* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 8. Many assume that modern philosophy (Hume and Kant) and evolutionary theory (Darwin's critique of William Daley's 'blind watchmaker' argument) have discredited the possibility and value of natural theology. In its response to nineteenth-century liberalism, neo-orthodox Protestant theology has generally tried to do without natural theology by keeping science and theology separate. See Keith E. Yandall, "Protestant Theology and Natural Science in the Twentieth Century," in *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science*, ed. David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: The University of California Press, 1986), 448–71; cf. McGrath, *Nature*, 267–79. McGrath, however, closely follows the work of T.F. Torrance in understanding natural theology more positively and broadly as an authentically Christian understanding of nature grounded in divine revelation, rather than the attempt to demonstrate God's existence on purely rational grounds (*ibid.*, 279–86).

⁸ Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1997), 100–105. Barbour actually distinguishes a "theology of nature" from a "systematic synthesis," in that the latter, by the use of process philosophy, attains an even greater integration of the two fields. He articulates his own position thus: "I am in basic agreement with the 'Theology of Nature' position, coupled with a cautious use of process philosophy. Too much reliance on science in natural theology can lead to the neglect of the areas of experience that I consider most important religiously" (105). One may note that

Barbour, a theology of nature “starts from a religious tradition based on religious experience and historical revelation. But it holds that some traditional doctrines need to be reformulated in the light of current science.”⁹ Although the search for consonance can be a legitimate goal in the dialogue between science and theology, “what consonance often seems to mean in practice is that theology is asked to redraw its map in order to fit its coastlines to new scientific understandings.”¹⁰ However, any position that advocates conforming truths based on divine revelation to the latest findings of modern science has begun to confuse the two disciplines, failing to distinguish their different foundations.¹¹ This “fusion” of the two disciplines leads to a “scientific theology” or a “theological science,” what Avery Dulles has called “a kind of methodological Monophysitism.”¹²

he seems to make religious experience and interpersonal relations, not specifically the data of revelation, as theology’s primary resource that is distinct from the knowledge of nature shared with science.

⁹ Barbour, *Religion and Science*, 100.

¹⁰ Southgate et al., *God, Humanity, and the Cosmos*, 24. One typical example would be a revision of the doctrine of original sin in light of the theory of evolution’s account of the origin of the human species.

¹¹ To be clear, it is not that theology, as an explanation of what is believed, cannot change—indeed, it must vary in accordance with the cultures it endeavors to communicate with. But the requirement that theology adapt its understanding to fit a scientific conception of nature need not require changes in Christian beliefs themselves, a conclusion permissible upon the real distinction, not always recognized today, between doctrine and theological expression.

¹² Avery Dulles, SJ, “Science & Theology,” in Russell, *John Paul II on Science and Religion*, 10–11. McGrath himself uses the term “scientific theology” as the title and goal of his approach (cf. note 4 above), although with his awareness of the historical and philosophical aspects of the science–theology relationship, as well as his effort to base a Christian understanding of the world on the doctrine of creation, he is careful to avoid a conflation of the disciplines and does not seek to reconfigure Christian beliefs in light of the new scientific worldview. For McGrath, “scientific theology” is a “Christian theology [that] provides an interpretative framework by which nature may be interpreted. This approach takes nature as an *explicandum*, something which requires or demands explication, but is not itself possessed of the intrinsic capacity or ability to offer such an explanation” (*Nature*, 294). This framework “offered by Christian theology includes both an account of the natural order of God’s creation and of humanity as created in the *imago Dei*” (ibid., 295)—an approach quite equivalent to what I mean by a ‘theological cosmology’ giving context for theological anthropology. A significant difference, however, between his understanding and the one I am sketching here on Thomistic grounds is that McGrath, again following Torrance, ascribes to the idea that sin has marred nature itself, to the point that the “created order, as it presently exists and as it is presently conceived, incorporates within it a deep-rooted dimension of disorder” (ibid., 290).

John Paul II explicitly and repeatedly warns that such an outcome is not the proper goal of this dialogue.¹³ And yet in two influential typologies of the different ways the relation of science and theology can be conceived, the troublesome conflation of the two disciplines is not even considered.¹⁴ While there are indeed various similarities between the methodologies of the two disciplines, they remain distinct because the data proper to the science of theology can only be known in the faith inspired by grace.¹⁵

The assumption that theology must adapt to the latest scientific findings rests in large part upon the recognition that modern science has given us a new cosmology, an understanding of the world so fundamentally novel that the traditional, pre-scientific conception of God's relation to the world

¹³ "By encouraging openness between the Church and the scientific communities, we are not envisioning a disciplinary unity between theology and science like that which exists within a given scientific field or within theology proper" (John Paul II, "Address at the Vatican Observatory," M7). "Yet the unity that we seek, as we have already stressed, is not identity. The Church does not propose that science should become religion or religion science. On the contrary, unity always presupposes the diversity and integrity of its elements. Each of these members should become not less itself but more itself in a dynamic interchange, for a unity in which one of the elements is reduced to the other is destructive, false in its promises of harmony, and ruinous of the integrity of its components. We are asked to become one. We are not asked to become each other" (ibid., M8).

¹⁴ In his well-known typology Ian Barbour offers four ways of relating science and religion: conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration. See *Religion and Science*, 77–105. John Haught offers a very similar fourfold typology: conflict, contrast, contact, and confirmation. See *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 3–25. Both Barbour and Haught favor respectively their fourth model—the most integrative—to counter the lingering myth that the disciplines are at war and to seek a comprehensive, synthetic understanding of the human experience of reality. While these two objectives are noble, the danger that a facile concordism of the two disciplines that risks science setting the bounds for theology does not seem to occur to them.

¹⁵ Cf. Dulles, "Science and Theology," 13–15. The methodological similarities in both disciplines include the cognitional principles of reason and faith, the historical element of a place for the authority of tradition in each discipline with an openness to new developments, and the communal element where both disciplines are group endeavors, with group control of the content and the practice of methodology. Yet Dulles also acknowledges distinguishing elements belonging to theology alone that other comparisons tend to omit or ignore: that the assent of faith to theological truth requires grace, that its doctrines rest upon an unalterable deposit of unique, unrepeatable, past events of revelation and salvation, that over the authority within the discipline of theology is the authority of an infallible ecclesial magisterium.

must be updated accordingly.¹⁶ At issue is not that modern science has exchanged the creation narratives given in Genesis with its own account of the world's origin (although this displacement has helped to push revelation outside the ambit of intellectual respectability). The more important shift is from a static cosmology of enduring substances designed and produced directly by the Creator to an evolutionary cosmology of emergent states brought about and "self-organized" by natural mechanisms. What used to be attributed to God as the intelligent, deliberative, powerful, and, thus, creative cause is now attributed simply to natural mechanisms, fully capable through unintelligent and random processes of producing all the beings and features of this universe. Respecting this new view of nature, not a few theologians deem former conceptions of the character of God and his relationship with the world to be inadequate and obsolete. In their thinking, the absolute perfections traditionally ascribed to God may have fit a world once thought to have been formed directly by his knowledge and power, but not one now known to have organized itself gradually. The Creator's omniscience is difficult to reconcile with the genuine unpredictability of random processes, his perfectly efficacious will with temporal contingency, and his omnipotence with the autonomy and self-sufficiency of natural causes.¹⁷ This difficulty, along with the conception of nature primarily in terms of processes and not substantial forms, lead many contemporary theologians to embrace process thought, convinced that it provides a model of God more compatible with the world of development and flux known by modern science.¹⁸

¹⁶ For example, Barbour argues that the classical theology of God as absolute Lord and King reflected the assumptions of the medieval mind that the world was like a kingdom of enduring substances in a fixed, teleological, hierarchical, and dualistic (spirit/matter) order. See *Religion and Science*, 281–82, 306–20.

¹⁷ The assumption that the traditional conception of God is incompatible with the findings of modern science is widespread in the theology and science literature. For example, Mark William Worthing quotes, without evident objection, the physicist Richard Schlegel: "[I]f we accept the divine postulate, the discoveries of this century in quantum physics surely must affect our conceptions of God. The independent, all-knowing deity of Christian orthodoxy is no longer within the possibilities allowed by the postulate. . . . [Instead God] is limited in knowledge and power in accordance with the statistical, probabilistic properties that quantum theory finds for nature." See *God, Creation, and Contemporary Physics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 70.

¹⁸ A few thinkers engaged in the science–theology dialogue who explicitly opt for a process philosophy and/or theology include: Barbour, *Religion and Science*, cf. 281–304; John F. Haught, *God After Darwin: A Theology of Evolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 40–44; Philip Clayton, *God and Contemporary Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 82–124.

The appeal of process theology is a God dynamically in sync with an evolving world, a deity more intimately involved than the conventional God of transcendence (read: distant aloofness) and immutability (that is, unsolicitous isolationism). Unfortunately, this choice for a God who changes with the world comes at the steep price of abandoning the doctrine of creation, necessary to prevent the non-identification of God with the world.¹⁹ Other problems for theology notwithstanding,²⁰ the consequence of bringing God down to the level of change and process is to strip God of an engagement with the world conceived in transcendent terms. By claiming that God changes with the world and thereby making God subject to its conditions, process thought necessarily makes it impossible for God to act in the world in a transcendent manner and for the sake of a transcendent end.

First, in regard to the loss of the transcendent manner of God's action, the identification of God with world process necessarily means his agency is conceived in terms of the kinds of causality found in the world, if only better by degree. Yet such a reduction unavoidably prolongs the fundamental misconception that modern science has regarding divine action—that it competes with natural causality and thus undermines scientific accounts of how things happen. With no way to attribute what is nature's to nature and what is God's to God, some process theologians go so far as to celebrate a divine hands-off approach to the world as theologically becoming, reflective of God's humility and wisdom to curtail his power.²¹

¹⁹ Alfred North Whitehead acknowledged that the God of process thought is not the true Creator of the world. *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 528f.; cf. John Cobb and David Griffin, *Process Theology: An Essay in Cosmology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 66. Aquinas would agree that a mutable God cannot create, since a God of potency cannot be the pure Act that must be the first principle of all that comes to be. See *Summa theologiae* I, q. 3, aa. 4 and 7. Unlike process thinkers, however, Aquinas realizes that such a theological position leaves the actual existence of God (and the world) unaccounted for, since potency in God prevents his essence from being identical to existence, requiring a further cause to bring what is potential in him into existence. Process thinkers do not seem to realize the import of the metaphysical axiom that “nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality” (*ST* I, q. 2, a. 3).

²⁰ For criticisms that show the incompatibility of the process system with Christian teaching, see R. C. Neville, “The Impossibility of Whitehead's God for Christian Theology,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 44 (1970): 130–40; and Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Change? The Word's Becoming in the Incarnation* (Still River, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1985), 140–53.

²¹ For example, Haught gives us a God who practices a “letting-be” (*God After Darwin*, 111–14) and an “unobtrusive and self-absenting mode of being” (54) vis-à-vis the world. His difficulty with any real divine action in the world seems to arise because he thinks divine causality, as other than natural causality, can be

Second, in regard to the loss of the transcendent end of divine action, what the process God seeks to accomplish is measured by and thus limited to the potencies found in the world, rather than the transcendent wisdom, goodness, and power of God. The order of providence is reduced to the natural order, within which supernatural acts, like miracles, make no sense, and the subordination of this world's goods to the transcendent good of eternal life is lost.

The use of process thought in theology's engagement with science, therefore, prevents the development of a properly theological cosmology by emptying God of the transcendence that makes his presence and action in the world distinctive, for purposes far beyond those found in the material and biological orders. Though the justification offered is that a mutual God-world relation is better for both terms, the identification of the world's becoming with God's self-realization results in a conflation that compromises the non-equivalent integrity of each, leading to a problematic synthesis of science and theology. Although to its adherents the cosmology of pantheism is more sacred than the wholly secular worldview of deism or scientific materialism, in actuality it can be judged as still rather secular, in the sense that it is not nature that has been placed into a higher, theological viewpoint based upon revelation, but rather the mystery of God's being, actions, and purposes have been made to fit the confines of this world. The unfortunate consequence of all this is that the dialogue meant to provide greater intellectual coherence between revealed doctrine and scientific learning has actually helped sustain the narrow-mindedness of modern secularism regarding what is real and true.

To reverse this trend, theological engagement with modern science must rest upon the teaching that process thought has abandoned. Developing a single understanding of our world from these two methodologies requires the one foundation that sustains them both: the doctrine of creation. Theology and science are capable of their engagement only because God is the *author* of all that is knowable (in nature and in revelation), as well as of all human knowing (reason and faith). Modern science itself rests upon two cosmological truths that arise precisely

“supernatural” only in the miraculous sense—that is, as producing its effect without the usual natural cause. As such, divine actions simply take the credit of responsibility away from natural causes, and conflicts with the scientific effort to find natural explanations. Writing against creationism and intelligent design, Haught is concerned to deny an interventionist conception of divine action. Yet he does not give any consideration to the traditional notion of divine first causality being universally responsible for the genuine responsibility of secondary natural causes.

because the world has been created by the wisdom and free act of God—namely, that the world is both intelligible and yet non-necessary.²² Though supportive of science, the truth that the world is created is strictly a theological doctrine, one that implies a non-reductive understanding of God and his active relation to the world. Hence, an understanding of all reality *as created* is the key to the proper form of dialogue between theology and science and the necessary basis for seeing the very same reality known by science in a broader, theological perspective. A theological cosmology based upon the revelation that God is the Creator will elucidate how this world, whose natural operations are properly explained by science, is also a theological reality, whose deeper intelligibility is expressed only in terms of its relation to God.

The theology of Thomas Aquinas is particularly well-suited to offer the resources to engage modern science to produce this theological cosmology in which traditional Christian teaching is fully compatible with, yet not reducible to, the understanding of the world in modern science. Aquinas's theology of God the Creator provides something vital to, and altogether missing from, the contemporary dialogue between theology and science—namely, a rich understanding of how the Creator acts in and for the world in a manner that neither compromises his eternal mystery nor the integrity of finite conditions and causes in the world. Aquinas was able to show how this world of temporality, diversity, and finitude relates to the God of eternity, simplicity, and perfection, while upholding both the genuine causal determination of natural effects by natural causes and God's universal causal determination of all that is and acts in creation. In other words, he acknowledges the integrity of nature now studied by science, yet places that within a theological understanding of reality as a created and providential work of God. His understanding of this world as a relation to an active God depends entirely upon the doctrine of creation, a truth of faith in whose light he transformed the Aristotelian philosophical understanding of nature he inherited.

²² “For empirical science to arise at all, there must be the belief—or at least the presumption—that the world is both contingent and regular. There must be regularities in the world, otherwise there will be nothing for science to discover; but they must be contingent, otherwise they . . . could be thought out a priori” (Eric Mascall, *Christian Theology and Natural Science* [London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1957], 98, quoted in Yandall, “Protestant Theology and Natural Science in the Twentieth Century,” 462). Thomas F. Torrance develops the point more extensively in *Divine and Contingent Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 62–84.

Constructing a Theological Cosmology from the Theology of Thomas Aquinas

Before I proceed to show the resourcefulness of the Thomistic theology of creation for the formulation of a contemporary theological cosmology, I ought to make clear what I am *not* doing. What follows is in no way an attempt to correlate the scientific notion of the Big Bang with the theological doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Furthermore, what I am presenting here is something different than a demonstration of the existence and nature of God from the existence and features of this world. Rather than expound upon the famous five ways in question two, article three of the *Summa theologiae*, I will draw more heavily from Aquinas's theology of God and his profound understanding of creation as a relation to God. Aquinas was first and foremost a theologian, and I wish to highlight how he considered the things of our world in a theological manner, even if many of the explanatory concepts he employs are borrowed from philosophy. It is Aquinas's theological understanding of this world that is the needed complement to today's scientific cosmology. In this respect I am not presenting a *theology of nature* in the sense that Barbour advocates, since no admixture of the respective methodologies of theology and science is at stake. Aquinas's theological understanding of the created realm supplements and completes the understanding of nature that we can achieve scientifically and philosophically, precisely by considering reality as *created*. This theological perspective offers a helpful understanding of what science cannot definitively say about our reality as a whole, on account of the limitations of its foundation and method. Specifically, the task is to show in an intellectually coherent manner how the world known by science (and philosophy) requires a fuller understanding in relation to the providential God of Christian faith.

Even though Aquinas predates the emergence of modern science by several centuries, his thought is a fitting theological resource for its engagement in three respects: because of (1) his conception of theology; (2) his theology of God as pure Act with creation as a relation participating in that Act; and (3) his rich understanding of how God acts for and in the world.

First, a certain complementarity between his theology and modern science is possible because Aquinas conceives of theology as a science.²³ Of course, by "science" he means the Aristotelian definition of knowledge of necessary causes, not the modern sense of the mathematical measurement and modeling of matter, energy, and their fluctuations. Nevertheless, because

²³ *ST I*, q. 1, a. 2.

Aquinas considers theology to be a science in the sense of an organized, rational inquiry of what can be known of a cause by way of its effects, his understanding of theology has methodological similarities to that of contemporary science.²⁴ In its critical realism, the theology of Aquinas respects the natural dynamics of the human intellect, whose proper starting point is the sensible and whose proper object is true knowledge of the real. This epistemological similarity to modern science is strengthened by the particular approach taken by Thomistic theology, with its special regard and respect for created reality. “St. Thomas of the creation” treats the material world not just as a symbol of the spiritual but also as possessing an intelligibility and goodness worth knowing and appreciating for its own sake. Because our knowledge proceeds from effect to cause, he especially views nature as a dynamic or active reality, being attentive to the nature of each thing as an operating agent making a real difference in the world. His realism is so open to the givenness of the world that he never attempts to discount or ignore the contingency (non-necessity) and chance (the accidental) present in many causal occurrences in this world, despite the challenges these aspects pose for a theologian committed to a universal divine providence.²⁵ Still, the most important element that connects Aquinas’s theology both to the real character of the world and to the methodology and content of modern science is his fundamental sense of *order*, reflecting his commitment to “things which in their inter-relatedness form the world.”²⁶ The *exitus-reditus* order Aquinas gives to the *Summa theologiae* parallels the providential order God gives to his creation.²⁷ In explicitly

²⁴ The theological science of sacred doctrine differs, of course, from the philosophical and mathematical sciences in terms of its principle, divine knowledge expressed in divine revelation, and in terms of its object, God and all things in their relation to God as beginning and end (*ST* I, q. 1, aa. 5 and 7). And because the purpose of our own existence is included in this scholarly effort on the relation of created realities to God, theology is more properly wisdom than a science in any restricted, modern sense. Nonetheless, even though theology presupposes faith, it is an exercise of reason, seeking what understanding can be had of God through the effects he has produced in creation and salvation history. Aquinas’s conviction that all the branches of human knowledge are related and comprehensively united is evident in his *Expositio super librum Boethii De trinitate*, questions V and VI, translated as *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, trans. Armand Maurer, 4th rev. ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1986).

²⁵ Cf. Bernard McGinn, “The Development of the Thought of Thomas Aquinas on the Reconciliation of Divine Providence and Contingent Action,” *The Thomist* 39 (1975): 741–52.

²⁶ Frederick C. Copleston, *Aquinas* (New York: Penguin, 1955).

²⁷ For Aquinas to order theology along the trajectory of divine providence demonstrates his respect for creation and the serious—indeed, unavoidable—obligation

noting that the order of creation is a reality specifically intended and created by God,²⁸ Aquinas points to the common foundation that makes science, metaphysics, and theology possible and fruitful. As we are about to see, his twofold understanding of this order as both intrinsic and extrinsic helps to delineate and correlate a scientific cosmology and a theological cosmology.

And yet, though his theological method and approach have striking parallels to those of contemporary science, Aquinas is respectful of the profound difference between the disciplines, avoiding their fusion. As much as he considers theology to be an exercise of reason and hence a science, he knows its foundation is one of faith, distinguishing and elevating it about all other branches of knowledge.²⁹ Of great significance is the fact that he employs philosophical terms and concepts to express the mystery of how the world relates to God and how God acts in it. In his understanding of metaphysics Aquinas possesses an explanatory system that is distinct from that in science, enabling him to avoid conflation of the mystery of God with that of the natural world.³⁰ Specifically, Aquinas employs the neo-Platonic notion of participation to show how created

to know its basic structure in order to acquire some theological understanding of its Author. This systematic ordering of the *Summa theologiae* confirms that Aquinas is faithful to his definition of the true subject of theology as: “Omnia autem pertractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei: vel quia sunt ipse Deus; vel quia habent ordinem ad Deum, ut ad principium et finem” (*ST I*, q. 1, a. 7).

²⁸ *ST I*, q. 22, a. 1: “Omne enim bonum quod est in rebus, a Deo creatum est, ut supra ostensum est. In rebus autem invenitur bonum, non solum quantum ad substantiam rerum, sed etiam quantum ad ordinem earum in finem, et praecipue in finem ultimum, qui est bonitas divina, ut supra habitum est. Hoc igitur bonum ordinis in rebus creatis existens, a Deo creatum est.” See also *ST I*, q. 15, a. 2.

²⁹ *ST I*, q. 1, aa. 1–2, 5.

³⁰ Barbour too recognizes the value of metaphysics for providing explanatory concepts that lie between those specific to theology and those specific to science. “A more systematic integration can occur if both science and religion contribute to a coherent world view elaborated in a comprehensive metaphysics. Metaphysics is the search for a set of general categories in terms of which diverse types of experience can be interpreted. An inclusive conceptual scheme is sought that can represent the fundamental characteristics of all events. Metaphysics as such is the province of the philosopher rather than either the scientist or the theologian, but it can serve as an arena of common reflection.” See Barbour, *Religion and Science*, 103. However, Barbour finds fault with traditional metaphysics and opts for that of process philosophy. “The Thomistic framework provided such a metaphysics, but one in which, I would argue, the dualisms of spirit/matter, mind/body, humanity/nature, and eternity/time were only partially overcome” (*ibid.*). Unfortunately, McGrath’s treatment, “The Place of Metaphysics in a Scientific Theology,” in *A Scientific Theology*, vol. 3, *Theory* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 237–94, does not engage the thought of Thomas Aquinas.

reality depends upon and is in its Creator, and the Aristotelian distinction of the different kinds of causality to explain the different ways God acts in regard to the world.³¹ The very fact that these terms are philosophical, and not scientific, helps to keep this theological cosmology distinct from any scientific counterpart, expressing something true about our reality that modern science cannot say but only suggest.³²

The second justification for turning to Aquinas for guidance in today's dialogue between theology and science is that in his theology of God the Creator, Aquinas develops a theology of God as Act that expresses simultaneously the transcendent distinctiveness of God and his active immanence in creation. In contrast to process theology's reduction of God into the created category of *becoming* (process), Aquinas shows that God is, simply and perfectly, the dynamic act of *being* itself.³³ Identifying the essence of God with subsistent existence positively forbids any confusion of the divine mystery with created reality, since what comes into existence cannot by necessity be its own existence.³⁴ Implied in this absolute non-equivalence is the truth that the relation of the world to God is wholly unlike any relation existing between things in this world. Despite the propensity of our imaginations to group them as such, God and the world are not two parts of some greater context. The mystery of God and the nature of the world are not co-defining; the latter exists only as a limited sharing in and reflection of the inexhaustible fullness of the former. Indeed, in light of the doctrine of creation, Aquinas realized that the world must be understood as a *relation*, a reality that is what it is

³¹ Cf. *ST I*, qq. 44, 104–5.

³² Hence the fact that these philosophical notions are not themselves used by modern science is no detriment to their value. On the contrary, since they help explain a view of reality that is complementary to but distinct from that of science, their non-appearance in the lexicon of science is to be expected.

³³ *ST I*, q. 2, a. 3. His argument rests upon the revealed name *Yahweh* (Ex 3:14) and the derived existence of the world.

³⁴ Cf. *ST I*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 1: "It is against the nature of a made thing for its essence to be its existence; because subsisting being is not a created being; hence it is against the nature of a made thing to be absolutely infinite." With the precision of metaphysical thinking, Aquinas maintains the fundamental truth at the core of the doctrine of creation: that the God who freely creates every aspect of the world transcends the limits and conditions he establishes for it.

³⁵ "Creation places something in the thing created according to relation only; because what is created, is not made by movement, or by change. For what is made by movement or by change is made from something pre-existing. And this happens, indeed, in the particular productions of some beings, but cannot happen in the production of all being by the universal cause of all beings, which is God.

precisely on account of and in reference to God.³⁵ Despite the methodological bracketing of the relation of nature to God practiced in modern science, the doctrine of creation precludes this procedural habit from becoming an ontological forgetfulness. In a theological cosmology, unlike its strictly scientific counterpart, the existence, nature, and agency of created things are shown to be actual realities only because of God. In this way theology exposes, in the light of the doctrine of creation (and with the support of traditional metaphysics), the falsity of thinking the world is autonomous.

Just as the theological identification of God as *Act* indicates his transcendence over the world, so also does it imply that God is immanently active in creation and that creation is in God. This half of the matter tends to get overlooked by those who equate classical theism with a God remote from and uninvolved in creation. But if God is *Act* essentially, simply, and dynamically, God cannot be anything except *active* with respect to the world. God's universal and active immanence is also indicated by the world being a relation to its Creator, since "relation" designates, not some sort of inert arrangement, but a fundamental dependence upon God acting in freedom to cause the world's being, development, and perfection. For the world is a relation of participation in the essence of God, sharing in a diverse and limited way in his simple and infinite Act of being. *Participation* is the key term in the discussion of creation in the *Summa theologiae*,³⁶ used to explain how creation is like unto and dependent upon its Creator.³⁷ The universe has its existence from God's *be-ing* the way an iron bar is hot only by sharing in the heat of the fire: by an immediate and enduring participation.³⁸ Creation proceeds from God, not as from some

Hence God by creation produces things without movement. Now when movement is removed from action and passion, only relation remains, as was said above (*ST I*, q. 45, a. 2, ad 2). Hence creation in the creature is only a certain relation to the Creator as to the principle of its being" (*ST I*, q. 45, a. 3).

³⁶ For example, see how Aquinas uses the term repeatedly in *ST I*, q. 44, a. 1 (the first article of the treatise).

³⁷ For a more succinct and recent discussion of participation in the thought of Aquinas than the two magisterial studies by Louis Geiger (1952) and Cornelio Fabro (1961), see John F. Wippel, "Participation and the Problem of the One and the Many," in *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 94–131.

³⁸ *ST I*, q. 44, a. 1. Following Augustine, Aquinas also uses the example of how the sky's luminescence immediately depends upon the sun's shining as an analogy for God's sustaining creation in existence in *ST I*, q. 104, a. 1.

extrinsic cause from which it could then be severed, but as always remaining in God's act of willing it a share in himself.³⁹

This notion of *participation* expresses simultaneously: (1) the ongoing intimacy of creation *in* God, for creation is what it is only insofar as it stands in an immediate relation of receiving everything from God its source; (2) God's active relation to the world, for this sharing of creation in God's existence, beauty, and goodness is only on account of God actively and continually causing them to be in creation; and (3) the absolute transcendence of God over all that is the world, since what is by participation can never in any way be identified or confused with the source in which it is participating.⁴⁰ Because creation is in God as a participation, nature is not divinized as in pantheism, or made a part of God's being as in some modern theology. Yet created reality is fundamentally the effect and the arena of divine action, an understanding that reverses the secularization of the cosmos arising when, in the name of autonomy, nature is severed from its author. Through this notion Aquinas provides us a sophisticated way to express the theonomous character of all reality, how God's active sharing of his existence and perfections suffuses the very core of all created being. *Participation* is thus a key term that enables theology to articulate something simple, profound, and fundamental about our cosmos, which science leaves unsaid because it is a truth of faith: Reality is *created*, its constitution standing ever in a crucial relation of dependence upon God being God.

The genius of Aquinas's theology is the perfect symmetry between his theology of God and his theological understanding of creation. The God who is *Act* grants to creation a real (albeit limited) sharing in that Act, with-

³⁹ "Therefore that God gives existence to a creature depends on his will; nor does he preserve things in existence otherwise than by continually pouring out existence into them" (*ST I*, q. 104, a. 3).

⁴⁰ The causal relation indicated by the term *participation* is one where the effect comes to have a property or perfection that the cause has by essence. In the relation of creation to God, the perfections creation comes to have by participation exist virtually in God because his essence is existence itself, that which is most perfect (*ST I*, q. 4, a. 2). Since God is his essence, and all perfections are in him because his essence is existence, God is his perfections, simply and infinitely. In this regard when creation has a perfection (like existence) that God is, creation is only remotely like unto God, never comparable, because the manner by which the perfection is possessed (to say nothing of the degree to which it is possessed) is always so radically incomparable. Because it exists by participation, creation always is a relation of dependence upon God; in contrast, God is always the perfections he is essentially, regardless of creation's participation. Like a fire that is essentially hot regardless of whether an iron bar is sharing in its heat, God is what he is independent of creation, even as creation cannot be anything except by dependent participation in God.

out change on his part, not only because he is simple and beyond change, but also because creation itself requires for its existence and perfection nothing less than an immutable God who is pure Act. In this theology of creation, there is no room for the dipolar God of process thought who needs the world in order to gain completion for himself. Rather than meaning a change in who he is, God's act of creating the world and his providential actions of sustaining and governing it are one with and true to his eternal being. This is crucial for the development of a theological cosmology because it maintains the Godness of God in his activity on behalf of the world. Only by avoiding the reduction of the mystery of God into the categories of the world can the theologian find a way to speak of God's presence and agency in creation that is distinct from natural causality. Not only is the causality of God understood as different in kind, but as greater in scope, being that which grounds and frames the causality of nature. God's activity, vis-à-vis the world, is abiding, not limited to the first instance of creation (as in deism) or the offering of only possibilities (as in process theology). God's activity is also foundational, penetrating, and overarching, providing the transcendent context for created reality and keeping in check the tendency to absolutize the conditions of our reality or the powers of our reason. Hence only the absolute transcendence of God allows for his universal immanence in creation, which in turn promotes the sacred sense of nature as infused with the divine presence.

In a theology of God like that of Thomas Aquinas, one that works out the implications of the doctrine of creation, it is never a question of *whether* God acts in this world; it is simply a matter of finding a proper way to express *how*. The third reason why the thought of Aquinas can be a rich resource for a contemporary theological cosmology, compatible with the worldview of modern science, derives from his explanation of God's agency vis-à-vis the world using the Aristotelian explanatory heuristic of the different kinds of causality. In using metaphysics to help explain the providence of God's ways with the world, Aquinas is able to provide an account of the nexus between divine and natural causality that completely avoids any territorial disputes with the natural sciences over which cause, God or nature, is responsible for the natural effects witnessed in the world. For Aquinas, God the Creator is the first (efficient), exemplary (formal), and final (good) cause of all that is in creation, in a generously distributive manner that produces the genuine natural causality examined and explained by the modern sciences. The integrity of nature is upheld,⁴¹ yet

⁴¹ The modern term for this integrity of natural causal responsibility is "autonomy," a term that I purposely avoid since it tends to connote complete independence

God is not banished to the sidelines of the world playing field, limited to being a mere spectator because his contributions would violate the rules of the game. In this relation of natural (secondary) causality to divine agency, God is universally active as God (that is, operating with his absolute perfections of omniscience, omnipotence, omni-benevolence, etc.), so that natural causes, acting in accordance with their own limited conditions and capabilities, may be genuinely responsible for their effects. No conflict or interference between divine and created causality is possible because the two are completely non-equivalent kinds of causality, the former the universal Act that makes all natural causality *actual*. Hence, all that science comes to explain about how natural causes produce what occurs in the world is here fully acknowledged. Yet theology adds something true but not yet said: God, too, is acting, since all of this exists, is intelligible, and is ordered.

It is crucial to understand that God's universal, creative agency is not just that of first causality. Divine agency that grounds all that is created is three-fold: the efficient causing of all created existence and operation, the exemplary causing of all form and intelligibility in creation, and the final causality of all that is good or ordered in creation.⁴² A theological cosmology adds to the scientific worldview an indication of how the actual existence, intelligibility, and goodness of the universe are only really explicable by reference to a wise and good Creator, who, because he acts by wisdom and good will, produces traces of—really, participations in—his wisdom and goodness in creation. Any intelligible form found in the world (for example, any organism), even if emergent through non-intelligent processes, has its character of intelligibility, not from an exceedingly improbable chance of its component parts falling together simultaneously, but as a limited sharing in the infinite intelligibility that is God himself.⁴³ Likewise, all that is ordered in the world, all the laws that science discovers as grounding natural development, have their character of purposefulness as a participation in the God who, essentially, is goodness itself.

from all other extrinsic agents or authorities (including, not infrequently, God). The dependence of the created upon God is not, of course, a matter of constraint of or interference with what is natural, but rather the very bringing into existence thereof.

⁴² *ST I*, q. 44, aa. 1, 3, 4; cf. *ST I*, q. 6, a. 4, where Aquinas says of divine goodness that it is “*primo principio exemplari, effectivo et finali totius bonitatis*.” The fourth kind of causality in the Aristotelian explanatory heuristic is material (including potency), which does not apply to divine agency but is found in visible creation.

⁴³ Cf. *ST I*, q. 15, on the divine ideas (or the infinite exemplarity of the divine essence).

One implication of the richness of the Thomistic understanding of divine agency is that it can never be reduced to the restrictive categories of causality permitted in natural sciences, principally the material and efficient causes of mechanical physics. God is not some invisible finger pushing this or that object in creation or flipping a control switch from indeterminacy to determinacy at the quantum level.⁴⁴ For Aquinas, God's efficient causality is analogous, not equivalent, to its natural counterpart; one difference is that it is universal in reach and not restricted to particular occasions or only certain kinds of effects. More important, even to say that God is the universal efficient cause of all causality is not to say enough about divine action in the world. The notions of divine exemplary and final causality imply, for instance, that God acts not to show off his power but to diffuse his truth, beauty, and goodness.⁴⁵ Discussion of the very *goodness* of things is one way a theological cosmology is more comprehensive than a merely scientific one that has little to say about this important dimension of our created world.⁴⁶ It is not chance but intentional divine wisdom and goodness that upholds our reality.

Aquinas's conception of divine final causality in the world has another important aspect that is crucial for a contemporary theological cosmology. God's action as Final Cause is that of the governor of creation, directing or guiding creatures to the good purpose of his providence in their very pursuit of natural ends that are intrinsically appealing to them because they perfect their being. Such divine guidance is possible through the very order of creation established by the Creator because creaturely goodness is but a participation in divine goodness. In accordance with the dynamics of

⁴⁴ The tendency to conceive of causality strictly in mechanistic and efficient terms since the advent of Newtonian physics is one reason theologians have grown reluctant in ascribing divine causality in the world. Science rightly finds natural causality to be sufficient for every natural effect, so if causality is conceived only in these terms, then divine causality in the world becomes utterly superfluous—that is, no God of the “gaps.”

⁴⁵ Note that in the *Summa theologiae* the entire discussion of divine government—the temporal execution of the eternal plan of divine providence in the world—is in the terms of *end* or *goodness*, not in terms of *power*.

⁴⁶ The properly liturgical counterpart to this dimension of creation is the acknowledgment of the goodness of God, the intentional author of created good—that is, acts of praise and thanksgiving for the glory of and wonders in creation. Unless one sees, along with the authors of Genesis and of Psalms like 104, that created things are good, that creation as a whole is very good, and that God is to be praised for this goodness, then one does not see our reality in the truest light. On this biblical and liturgical link between creation and worship, see Joseph Ratzinger, *In the Beginning . . . : A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 27–33.

participation, creatures, in seeking their own good, seek God, the essence of goodness by which all things are good.⁴⁷ Yet the particular ends sought by individual creatures are ordered to the common good of the whole universe, so that it may have the perfection of diversity and fullness that most fittingly reflects the infinite, varied depths and breadth of God's own mystery.⁴⁸ What this represents, cosmologically speaking, is that the one order of creation includes first an intrinsic ordering of all things to a (penultimate) good within creation—the “glory of creation,” as it were. Then there is a further, extrinsic ordering of the whole to an ultimate good outside of creation—the divine goodness itself, or God's own glory.⁴⁹

Thus, one may speak first of the common, constitutive good of the whole universe to which all things contribute, as scientists do in explaining the countless ways the many parts of creation are always ordered for the sake of some greater whole—whether it is the cells and organs for the well-being of the whole organism, the individual creature for the good of the species, the species for the overall ecosystem, or, as with the anthropic principle, the exact, favorable specificity of the physical and chemical suborders for the sustaining of the higher orders of life and mind. Yet beyond this intrinsic ordering, there is the higher ordering of all to the end of God's glory: the ordering of nature to grace and the human good to the eschatological Kingdom. Here is where the economy of salvation connects with the intelligibility of the cosmos: both are part of one providential ordering of all things to God.⁵⁰ Though one cannot read off of nature the higher divine intentions revealed in the history of

⁴⁷ *ST I*, q. 103, aa. 2, 4; I–II, q. 1, a. 8; q. 2, a. 8. All creatures seek God so as to “attain himself from himself, according to their measure, since he is their end” (*Summa contra gentiles* III, ch. 18, 5).

⁴⁸ *ST I*, q. 22, a. 4; q. 103, a. 2, ad 3.

⁴⁹ *ST I*, q. 103, a. 2.

⁵⁰ In the dialogue between theology and science, it is crucial not to treat as identical the natural order and the order of divine providence, since the transcendent end of the latter (deification of the rational creature) encompasses the divine work of salvation which both incorporates and transcends the end of the former. The rationalism that restricts divine purpose to natural ends continues to infect theology's engagement with science when supernatural acts are considered problematic for conflicting with natural order. Benedict Spinoza's denial of miracles, on the “theological” basis that they are unbecoming of God who ought to be able to engineer a perfectly consistent body of natural laws, continues to have currency. But to discredit miracles as a poor model for divine action because they do away with natural causes is to expect them to make sense for natural reasons. Process thought contributes to this expectation, for in making the realization of the world's possibilities the becoming of God it collapses the difference between what lies beyond the capabilities of nature and what lies within them. A process

salvation, yet nature itself makes ultimate sense only in reference to the very same end to which grace brings the human family: active participation in the goodness of God. The things of this world cannot be properly understood strictly in the terms of the world's own intrinsic intelligibility. It is in the terms of God's higher ordering of humanity to himself that the truest reason for the order present in the cosmos will be found.

This differentiation between the intrinsic and extrinsic orderings of creation does not amount to a cosmological dualism because both are aspects of the one providential order of creation.⁵¹ Upon them is based the distinction of the secular from the sacred, but the linking of the two orderings means that the everyday and the holy are ultimately integrated. Understanding the ordering of the universe to its intrinsic end is the province of science, while understanding the ordering of the universe to its extrinsic end is the province of theology.⁵² Even as each ordering grounds its respective discipline, giving it an independent, field-specific competence and authority, so too does the interrelation of the two orderings require the dialogue between science and theology. Since the intrinsic ordering of the universe has its ultimate ground and meaning only in relation to the universe's extrinsic ordering to God,⁵³ a scientific cosmology that expresses the world's intrinsic ordering requires incorporation into a grander theological cosmology, one that expresses the relation of that universe to God its beginning and end. The same world that the scientist breaks down into its constitutive and causative parts, and the cosmologist begins to reconstruct in its totality, is the same world that the theologian sees, in the greater vision of faith, as proceeding forth from

theology beholden to science will frame everything in our world's terms, excluding the transcendent reference point of eternal life that miracles and grace require for their *raison d'être* in the divine plan. Unless this world's reality is understood to be ordered to that which transcends the natural, miracles, as divine interruptions of the normal dependency of effects upon their natural causes, will make no sense. As Gottfried Leibniz said, "I hold that when God works miracles he does it, not in order to supply the wants of nature, but those of grace; and whoever thinks otherwise must have a very mean notion of the wisdom and power of God," quoted in *Earnest Enquirers After Truth: A Gifford Anthology*, ed. Bernard E. Jones (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 154.

⁵¹ *ST I*, q. 22, a. 2; q. 103, aa. 5, 7.

⁵² One may add that philosophy can say something about both orders. The philosophy of nature can add to science a richer understanding of the intrinsic order of creation, while metaphysics can provide an account of what reason can know about how reality requires an ordering to something beyond itself.

⁵³ *ST I*, q. 103, a. 2, ad 3; *ScG I*, ch. 78, 4; bk. II, ch. 24, 4; and III, 64, 6; *De potentia Dei* 7, 9. *De veritate* 5, 3: "Quantumcumque ergo multitudinem invenimus ordinatam ad invicem, oportet eam ordinari ad exterius principium."

God, being sustained, directed, and redeemed by him in its course, and returning to him in the end.

The extrinsic, transcendent order of creation requires that God himself be its end. Yet once again this is something that cannot be said in process theology, which sacrifices the ordering of the world to God in favor of yoking God and the world together in a never-ending process of becoming.⁵⁴ When the mystery of God is subordinated to the dynamics of process and change in the world, the subordination of the world to God is lost. Besides the harm to the traditional understandings of God and salvation, the cosmological damage is no longer seeing the universe theologically, in reference to its destiny of participation in God. Without God as the end of all things, by which the good of all things are measured, created reality is cast adrift as autonomous and wholly self-determining. The consequence is an atheistic cosmology and anthropology where the dignity of freedom is said to reside in the unrestricted power to choose, rather than the responsibility to affirm in one's choice the wisdom and goodness of God to order all things well.

Thus we come full circle back to the beginning: A theological cosmology must give expression to the significance of the cosmos being ordered to God for it to support the truth and authenticity of the religious dimension of human nature. Such a cosmological vision must rest upon the doctrine of creation, because it is as Creator that God establishes all things in an order to an end that gives intelligibility and purpose to the existence and nature of everything. The way that all created reality, especially rational nature, relates and is ordered to God, its principle and telos, is a central theme of Thomistic theology, and the primary reason why Aquinas has much to offer us today for the construction of a theological cosmology amenable to modern science. While his approach is open to modern science by affirming the integrity of natural causality and the competence of reason to study it, still it remains truly a theology, not just of God in his transcendence and immanence, but of our reality, too. He

⁵⁴ Process theology does speak of a dipolar God, and Whitehead wrote that "God, as well as being primordial, is also consequent. He is the beginning and the end," quoted in *Process Theology: Basic Writings*, ed. Ewert H. Cousins (New York: Newman Press, 1971), 89. Yet because the notion of "process" is the primary notion by which everything, including God, is defined, there is no place in this system of thought for any genuine end of perfection, realization, or rest. If a definitive end were reached, then process would cease, and the fundamental reality of both God and the world would become the very thing (immutable) that process thinkers say they cannot be. Thus, not only is the process God no longer the true origin of all things (as noted above), he cannot also be the end (that is, heaven, home) to which all things return and come to rest in.

sees all existence as the overflow of God's goodness, all intelligible forms as participation in God's wisdom, all causality as the effect of divine action, and all perfection as the work of God's guidance. We must learn to see reality as theologically as Aquinas sees it, and communicate this theological vision to our modern, scientific world.⁵⁵ **N.V**

⁵⁵ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the International Thomistic Congress, "Christian Humanism in the Third Millennium: The Perspective of Thomas Aquinas," Rome, September 21–25, 2003.

Tristitia et Dolor: Does Aquinas Have a Robust Understanding of Depression?

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AFTER YEARS of introducing students and colleagues to Aquinas's teachings concerning the emotional life of man, I am still surprised by the complaint that his views concerning human affectivity appear static and dry, bereft of the very life that seems essential to this human experience. The root of this complaint is often found in their reaction to Thomas's scholasticism, particularly as it is characterized by an exacting method and heavy use of Aristotelian language and logic.¹ His style, admittedly, is not that of an Augustine, as these people often point out, especially when they compare the description that Augustine offers concerning the depths of his pain and sorrow experienced in the first eight books of his *Confessions*, with questions 35 through 39 of the *prima secundae* of Thomas's *Summa theologiae*, wherein he offers what appears to them a logically cold description of *dolor* and *tristitia*. Appearances aside, I argue that Aquinas's treatment of pain and sorrow, especially when seen within the broader context of his treatise concerning the emotions and the ethical life of man, betrays an understanding of sorrow every bit as rich as that which Augustine describes, and is far from being static and unrepresentative of the phenomenon itself. In this paper, I will offer a detailed explanation of how Aquinas understands sorrow, and arrive at the conclusion that he does in fact offer a robust view of it, akin to what most people today would recognize as depression. We

¹ This view is one generated by ignorance of the scholastic method itself, its purpose, how foreign it appears to readers of our time, and the natural barriers to interpretation and understanding it presents. These are nicely eliminated by Thomas F. O'Meara, OP's *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), especially chapters 1 and 2.

shall see that the depth of his treatment lies in the fact that he does not view sorrow solely as a material event proper to the body. Instead, he understands it as a specifically human experience, one intimately tied to man's nature, destiny, and happiness.

Although Thomas defines our emotions as the varied manifestations of sensitive appetite,² nonetheless we must understand this in reference to the being that experiences these phenomena.³ The emotional life, then, is indicative of a person's comportment to the things, people, and situations of his daily life, and this in a personal, intimate, and immediate way.⁴ Emotions arise from sensitive appetite only insofar as its proper object is present to it that is nothing other than some sensible thing that has been evaluated as suitable or not for the one sensing it. It is this that is central to Thomas's understanding of the emotions as personal statements, so to speak, of a person's standing with respect to those things that he, as an individual, considers to be good for himself. The primary concern in emotion is not the fact that something is good in itself; such a consideration is secondary to the presentation to the sensitive appetite of its proper object, and is proper only to the intellectual appetite, the will.⁵ Nonetheless, it is important to remember that the human experience of emotion is not restricted to the sensitive appetite and its movements. The appetitive and thus emotional experience of the human person includes both the natural and, especially, the intellectual appetites. Consequently, any discussion concerning the sensitive appetite as the seat, as it were, of the emotions must also consider that sensitive appetite takes place within a being imbued by reason which fact enriches the human person's sensitive appetitive experience, helping it to extend to many more things than is possible for sensitive appetite alone, as well as deepening any emotional experience that finds its genesis and development therein.⁶ At the very least, these points must be kept in mind as one reads any treatment by Aquinas on a particular emotion.⁷

² See the initial questions concerning emotion (*passio*) in general in *Summa Theologiae* I–II, qq. 22–25. Much of what is developed in this paragraph draws upon these four questions.

³ For it is not the sensitive appetite that experiences emotion, but rather the person by means of his sensitive appetite. See *ST* I, q. 77, and F. Copleston, *Aquinas* (London: Penguin, 1955), 163ff.

⁴ For this point, see S. Loughlin, "The Complexity of *timor* in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*," in *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso (Belgium: Brepols, 2002), 1–16.

⁵ See *ST* I, q. 80, a. 2, and I, q. 82.

⁶ This point is drawn out in detail in Loughlin, "The Complexity of *timor*."

⁷ There are many works that offer summaries of Aquinas's views concerning the emotions. A few of these are E. D'Arcy, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*,

When we approach Aquinas's treatment of sorrow, there is an initial difficulty, namely, that he uses two words throughout his treatment of this emotion in the *Summa theologiae* I–II, questions 35–39, to explain the phenomenon, namely, *dolor* (pain) and *tristitia* (sorrow).⁸ Thus, we must be careful to note the differences between the two notions.⁹ Pain is something that begins with a wound to the body and is completed in our apprehension of it, that is, with the recognition that the integrity of our body has been compromised. In this experience, one should note that, strictly speaking, there is very little of our humanity involved; reason, will, and the evaluation necessary for sensitive appetite, play no meaningful role in pain. There is simply one's awareness of, or attention to, the body's condition. Sorrow, on the other hand, *begins* with our cognition that is then evaluated by us, by means of our cogitative power, and completed in the activities of both the sensitive appetite and the body. Thus, for sorrow to arise, there must first be the evaluation that some person, thing, or situation is unsuitable to our well-being, and that this person, thing, or situation is present to us now, afflicting us with the very evil that we at first hated, from which we tried to separate ourselves, feared its advent, fought valiantly to prevent, but in the end were unsuccessful. From this arises the sensitive appetitive movement Thomas calls sorrow, as well as those common physiological reactions typically associated with it.¹⁰

What, then, is the relation between sorrow and pain? Given his focus upon the human experience of sorrow, Aquinas states that we are to see

vol. 19, *The Emotions* (1a2ae. 22–30), trans. Eric D'Arcy (Oxford: Blackfriars, 1967), xix–xxxii; Simon Kemp, "Emotion and Will," in *Medieval Psychology* (New York: Greenwood, 1990), 77–88; Henri Dominique Noble, "Passions," in *Dictionnaire de théologie Catholique*, vol. 11 (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1932), 2211–41; É. Gilson, *Le Thomisme: Introduction à la philosophie de saint Thomas D'Aquin*, 6th ed. (Paris: 1965), 335–51; and idem, *Moral Values and the Moral Life: The Ethical Theory of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (St. Louis: Herder, 1931), 91–133; Juvenal Lalor, "The Passions," in *The Summa Theologica of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 3 (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1948), 3220–35; and Robert E. Brennan, *Thomistic Psychology: A Philosophical Analysis of the Nature of Man* (New York: MacMillan, 1960), 131–68.

⁸ I will use these translations consistently throughout this paper.

⁹ Care is highly recommended in light of the fact that it is not a common practice for Thomas to use synonyms in his descriptions of things; he is very precise in his use of language, and this for the sake of revealing what is the truth of the matter at hand. Consider his comments in the *proemium* to the *Summa theologiae*. See Journet Kahn, *A Thomistic Theory of Emotion* (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1956), 28–57, for an extensive treatment of the distinction between a *passio corporalis* and a *passio animalis/animae* as exemplified here in the distinction between pain and sorrow.

¹⁰ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 1–2.

pain as something that, in addition to its bodily experience, extends in a generic fashion to sensitive and intellectual appetite. Thus, pain comes to be described as that emotion that arises when an evil of some kind presently afflicts our person. Pain, in this sense, becomes the genus associated with this phenomenon. Its species are *interior* and *exterior pain*, the principle of division being the kinds of apprehensions required for each, namely, the external senses for the latter and the interior cognitive powers of our sensitive and rational aspect for the former. The latter retains the name of the genus, while the former—broadening the generic notion by reason of the extensiveness that is brought to the experience by both sensitive and intellectual comprehension, and extending our concern beyond the present to include matters concerning the past and the future (Thomas mentions repentance and anxiety in this regard)¹¹ and to the possible objects of sorrow¹²—is renamed accordingly to sorrow.¹³ Nonetheless, it must be noted that given the unity of the human person, pain in its restricted sense (external pain) can still bring about a movement of our sensitive appetite, that is, of sorrow, but this only in an indirect way insofar as the pain that arises is repugnant to sensitive appetite through being repugnant to the body itself.¹⁴ Thus, I may be pained by an arthritic condition *and* sorrowed by the fact that I have arthritis or at the fact that I contributed to it by an inappropriate lifestyle or at the betrayal of my body as a consequence of the fallen condition of mankind.¹⁵ In such situations, our sorrow regards the things of external pain in both cause and apprehension, while external pain in itself cannot.

¹¹ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 2, obj. 2, and its reply.

¹² *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 2, ad 3.

¹³ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 2. This practice of renaming a passion, a power, or an activity to illustrate how it has been qualified by its presence in a being imbued by reason is common practice in the tradition out of which Aquinas works. For example, with respect to the sensitive cognitive powers of memory and evaluation, both are renamed as they appear in the rational soul, namely, to reminiscence and cogitation. They remain the same generically speaking, but now have become so enriched by their participation in the life of reason that a new name is appropriate. For the enrichment of memory in general, see Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Pimlico, 1966); Aristotle, *Aristotle on Memory*, trans. Richard Sorabji (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1972); and Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). For the enrichment of evaluation, see *ST* I, q. 78, a. 4; and George Klubertanz, *The Philosophy of Human Nature* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), 128–57.

¹⁴ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 7.

¹⁵ The latter sorrow is nicely described by Augustine in books XIII and XIV of *De civitate Dei*.

Thus, Aquinas agrees with what Augustine says, namely, that the “*sadness of the heart is every wound*, because even the pains of outward wounds are included under the interior sorrows of the heart.”¹⁶

The renaming of the properly human experience of pain to sorrow carries with it the implicit recognition that given its breadth with respect to time and object, it is a far more intense and debilitating experience than exterior pain, specifically as sorrow is related to our humanity. A sign of this lies in the fact that sorrow, besides being specific to the human experience, descriptive of a certain aspect of man’s sensitive appetitive life, and something that can intensify whatever bodily pain he might have, gives rise to the situation that there have been many good people throughout history, and even to this day, who have willingly endured pain for the sake of avoiding sorrow, and that this very pain, insofar as it was not repugnant to interior appetite, became “in a manner pleasant and agreeable by way of inward joy.”¹⁷ Thus, we have read of the saints and of other heroic men and women who were willing to suffer pain, even death, to avoid the sorrow associated with, say, abandoning the practice of philosophy (Socrates), or denying their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (St. Stephen and the early Christian martyrs), or undertaking a lie so as to save their own skin (St. Thomas More). Although such people suffered gravely, nonetheless they rejoiced in the fact that by their suffering, they, at the very least, did not violate those things that they considered to be more valuable than their own lives, and that, if in fact committed, would have been the occasion of a sorrow unknown to them up to that point. In a lesser way, we know of men and women who are willing to sacrifice their health, mental peace, financial stability, the pleasures of the bed, the bottle, and food, and other such things for the sake of higher goods, and who, in their suffering, find a certain satisfaction, even pleasure, as their suffering contributes to the realization and enjoyment of the good they seek.¹⁸ If such people

¹⁶ *ST I-II*, q. 35, a. 7. “‘Omnis plaga tristitia cordis est,’ quia etiam dolores exteriorum plagarum sub interiori cordis tristitia comprehenduntur.”

¹⁷ *ST I-II*, q. 35, a. 7. “Fit quodammodo delectabilis et iucundus interiori gaudio.”

¹⁸ Much of what is suggested here can be found in a close reading of the arguments and events of Plato’s *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*, together with the Socratic dictum that the unexamined life is not worth living. Epistemologically, Thomas also offers a reason for the depths of our sorrow: “Inward pain is not caused by the apprehended likeness of a thing: for a man is not inwardly pained by the apprehended likeness itself, but by the thing which the likeness represents. And this thing is all the more perfectly apprehended by means of its likeness, as this likeness is more immaterial and abstract. Consequently inward pain is per se greater as being caused by a greater evil, for as much as evil is better known by an inward apprehension” (*ST I-II*, q. 35, a. 7, ad 2). Thus, the all-too-common

are willing to endure even the pains associated with torture and death so as to avoid sorrow, one wonders at the effect that sorrow has upon one's very body and person.

The varied kinds of sorrow and their effects describe this well and demonstrate the specifically human dimension that is found in the experience of this emotion. First, Aquinas and his contemporaries were interested in four kinds. They derived from the works of St. John Damascene, who himself was heavily influenced by the writings of Nemesius.¹⁹ Sorrow for another's evil considered, however, as one's own in some fashion describes the experience of pity (*miser cordia*). Thus, we sorrow greatly for the troubles that our friends face without this evil being directly our own, but considered, because of the bonds of friendship, nonetheless to be ours.²⁰ Then there is the experience of envy (*invidia*). Here, we have someone experiencing sorrow for something that is neither evil nor his own. Instead, he envies another in the face of the other's good fortune whose good fortune, however, is considered as an evil to him; the other enjoys some good that the envious person does not and in the face of this envy, wishes that the other be deprived of it or that he himself attain that very good which the other enjoys and, thus, eliminate, so to speak, the advantage the other has over him.²¹ Third, there is a sorrow we experi-

sorrow that threatens to overwhelm the scholar or, more dangerously, the person of innate genius who beholds the evils of this life is a way normally not available to the general person, and this, without the scholar's training.

¹⁹ John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, ed. E. M. Buytaert, trans. Burgundio of Pisa (Louvain and Paderborn: 1955). See vi–xx for a brief biography, history, and the importance of this work. See also Constantine N. Tsirpanlis, *The Anthropology of Saint John of Damascus* (Athens: 1969), 5–20; E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 91–92; O. Lottin, “La psychologie de l’acte humain chez saint Jean Damascène et les théologiens du XIII^e siècle occidental,” in *Psychologie et morale aux XII^e and XIII^e siècles*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1957), 393–424; and St. John of Damascus, *Writings—The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, trans. Frederic H. Chase Jr. (New York: 1958), v–xviii, xxxii–xxxv. Némésius D’Émése, *De natura hominis*, ed. G. Verbeke and J. R. Moncho, trans. Burgundio de Pise (Leiden: Brill, 1975). See Chase in Damascus, *Writings*, xxxii–xxxv; and Buytaert in Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, which outlines in detail the exact borrowings from Nemesius.

²⁰ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 8. Consider also *ST* II–II, q. 30, a. 1–2. I will speak further of friendship below in relation to the effects and the alleviation of sorrow.

²¹ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 8. Examples of envy are unfortunately too commonplace to require an example here. As a side note, the creation of envy is at the heart of all advertising and is interesting (in relation to the description of envy) insofar as by presenting people in the ad with whom we have no personal connection, the only avenue to eliminate this sorrow is by leveling the playing field, so to speak, namely, to buy the very thing advertised. Thus, it is in the advertiser's best interest to know

ence that prevents our natural flight from an evil that afflicts us. Thomas calls this anxiety (*anxietas*) or perplexity (*angustia*). This sorrow is one that weighs upon the mind (*animus*) so as to make escape or flight seem impossible. Thus, we might experience a political situation at work that afflicts us, is progressing in its movement, seems out of our control, and allows for no escape. The presence of this evil to our minds under this description effectively robs us of our peace and sorrows us greatly, particularly as it excludes the possibility of flight; we simply have to see the entire situation through to its end. Finally, the situation could become so bad, and the anxiety so intense, that even our very limbs, speech, and other external activities are hindered in their natural operations, even, in some extreme cases, paralyzing them. This form of sorrow Aquinas calls torpor or sloth (*acedia*).²²

With respect to the effects of sorrow, we have the following: First, there is a lessened capacity to engage in those activities proper to our humanity, specifically the capacity to learn or, in extreme cases, to recall that which we had previously learned. The reason for this is that study requires an attention that pain and sorrow effectively rob insofar as their demands overwhelm us, drawing our attention away from all other considerations, and limiting our conscious direction or comportment to only those things that the pain or sorrow concern.²³ The examples of this are quite common: the experience of those who, in the grips of sorrow, fail to notice the most obvious of things, are absent-minded in their daily chores, are incapable of following the intricacies of a conversation, or who simply cannot follow anything requiring the attention or exertion

how to generate this envy and to identify the people whom he specifically wishes to experience this sorrow in the first place. For an extended commentary on this form of sorrow as it develops into a vice opposed to charity, see *ST II-II*, q. 36; for envy's relation to advertising, see Mark Kingwell, *In Pursuit of Happiness: Better Living from Plato to Prozac* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1998), 166–79.

²² Aquinas does not limit the experience of sorrow to just these four. This is evidenced by his reply to the second objection, where he speaks of repentance (*poenitentia*) as a form of sorrow associated with its proper object. He also mentions jealousy and indignation (*zelus et nemesis*), but only as they are related to envy (see *ST II-II*, q. 36, aa. 2, and 3). Thomas respects the traditional divisions concerning the eleven emotions of sensitive appetite as presented by St. John Damascene in his work *De fide orthodoxa*, but does not hesitate to delineate other species. Nonetheless, his concern is not to develop a catalogue of the emotions. Rather, he seeks to explain the general architecture of sensitive appetite so that he may write extensively, in the *secunda secundae*, about the virtues which perfect these, namely, the cardinal and theological virtues.

²³ *ST I-II*, q. 37, a. 1.

of the mind (the examples with respect to pain are even more obvious than these).²⁴

Next, there is what Thomas refers to as the oppression or weighing down (*aggravatio*) of one's person by sorrow. The use of *aggravatio* is here admittedly metaphorical, being more appropriately used to indicate a situation where, physically speaking, one is prevented from moving because of a heavy weight. Applying this to the experience of sorrow, the present evil is said to be like a weight that burdens the individual, preventing him from enjoying whatever it is he wants to enjoy. It impedes, as was said earlier, not just those activities proper to our very humanity, but also many and every other aspects of our person. So great can this sorrow be that it can confound or even paralyze not only one's body, but even one's very character and personality.²⁵ Finally, aligned with this experience is the fact that *aggravatio* gives rise to a limiting of one's contact with the external things and people of one's life, a sort of closing in on one's self, a withdrawal that may give rise to the situation wherein one is consumed, so to speak, by the very evil which afflicts. All hope is lost in such a situation, and one gives way to the depths of sorrow.²⁶

Clearly, then, sorrow and pain greatly weaken all that we do with respect to our humanity and the other aspects of our person, both animal and vegetative. Thomas notes that this weighing down especially afflicts the physiological aspect of our living. His explanation begins by noting that of all the emotions, sorrow and pain are directly and most powerfully opposed to the vital movement man experiences with respect to his very living, opposed both to this vital movement's generic description or qualitative aspect and to its measure or quantitative aspects. This vital movement arises out of man's nature and constitutes that most basic force driving man to seek whatever is conducive to his well-being on the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual level. Thus, man is urged by his nature to

²⁴ Nonetheless, Thomas does qualify this point by noting that one must consider not only the strength of the pain or sorrow involved, but also the love that a person has for those activities that can be hindered by the demands of pain and sorrow. Consequently, the more that one loves study or, more generally, engagement in those activities proper to our humanity, the stronger is one's *intentio* with respect to these, and the less is it hindered in the activities concerning those things that one loves. The experience of pain or sorrow can even have a sharpening effect upon the intellect. For moderate pain prevents the mind from wandering insofar as one strongly attends to the means whereby one might be freed from sorrow. Nonetheless, when the pain or sorrow go beyond a certain measure, it becomes either a hindrance or a preventative to reason and its activities.

²⁵ *ST I-II*, q. 37, a. 2

²⁶ *ST I-II*, q. 37, a. 2, ad 2 and 3.

seek out, obtain, and preserve the body's good, his own personal good, and, if properly educated, the good as such. Now, the fully ethical and happy person is one who has successfully brought his subjective desires and good in line with the objective demands made by his humanity and the purpose of his living. He has obtained the goods of fortune, body, and soul and has ordered them effectively both with regard to his nature and his end. These rightly and perfectly address his vital force or movement with respect to this force's nature and the measure of the goods that is appropriate to it. Now, exceeding right measure is a quantitative affair, but not one necessarily opposed to the qualitative aspect of man's nature and vital force. Thus, too much pleasure is opposed to right measure but not necessarily to the quality of man's nature, or more specifically, to his vital movement as human. If, however, the very course of man's nature is frustrated or hindered in seeking good, then this is repugnant to his very life, to his vital movement as human. Of all the emotions, sorrow most especially does this. The very nature of emotion is such that, being a phenomenon proper to sensitive appetite, one must also include the material changes that accompany emotion in one's understanding of it, and this as essential to the very experience itself.²⁷ Thus, in defining emotion, the bodily changes (*transmutationes*) are considered to be its material element, while the cognitive and, particularly, the evaluative are emotion's formal element.²⁸ Now, a general division can be made among the emotions by stating that although all of them may be experienced in excess, and thus improperly and immoderately, nonetheless, some of these will still be in conformity with the quality of the vital movement of our humanity, while others will not. We have already seen the former in connection with pleasure, and this can also be extended to love and desire. Thus, for example, we might say that immoderate love being in conformity with the direction and quality of our vital movement hurts it only indirectly through its excess. However, with respect to the latter, emotions like hatred, aversion, sorrow, fear, and despair are repugnant directly to the very nature and quality of our vital movement, as well as

²⁷ See *ST I*, q. 78, a. 1; and *I-II*, q. 22.

²⁸ See *ST I*, q. 20, a. 1, ad 2: "in passionibus sensitivi appetitus, est considerare aliquid quasi materiale, scilicet corporalem transmutationem; et aliquid quasi formale, quod est ex parte appetitus. Sicut in ira, ut dicitur in *I De anima*, materiale est accensio sanguinis circa cor, vel aliquid huiusmodi; formale vero, appetitus vindictae." See also *ST I*, q. 75, a. 3, ad 3; *I-II*, q. 22, a. 2, ad 3; *I-II*, q. 37, a. 4; and *I-II*, q. 44, a. 1: "in passionibus animae est sicut formale ipse motus appetitivae potentiae, sicut autem materiale transmutatio corporalis: quorum unum alteri proportionatur. Unde secundum similitudinem et rationem appetitivi motus, sequitur corporalis transmutatio."

indirectly hurting it through excess. Thomas mentions fear and despair particularly as doing great damage in this regard, but sorrow most of all since it “weighs down the soul by reason of a present evil which makes a stronger impression than future evil” (with which fear and despair deal).²⁹ Thus, sorrow is the most damaging of all the emotions, as it effects all that has been described above, and leads eventually to the hindrance, the shutting down, the paralysis, and even the consumption, so to speak, of one’s life on the psychological, physiological, intellectual, moral, and even the spiritual level.³⁰

What, then, are the causes of sorrow? From the preceding, it should be clear that its cause is evil, present, either really or cognitively, to an individual as it afflicts him, an evil that he previously hated, from which he tried to distance himself, but that he did not successfully accomplish. Now, since love is the foundation of our affectivity, giving rise to all the other emotions,³¹ one could say perhaps it is the absence of good that causes sorrow. However this may be (and indeed we can easily imagine

²⁹ *ST I–II*, q. 37, a. 4. “Passiones autem quae important motum appetitus cum fuga vel retractione quadam, repugnant vitali motioni non solum secundum quantitatem, sed etiam secundum speciem motus, et ideo simpliciter nocent: sicut timor et desperatio, et prae omnibus tristitia quae aggravat animum ex malo praesenti, cuius est fortior impressio quam futuri.”

³⁰ *ST I–II*, q. 37, a. 4. But what of anger and fear? Are they not more harmful than sorrow insofar as they can drive one to madness, and thus deprive one of one’s highest good, namely, reason itself (obj. 3)? Aquinas answers: “A lesser cause suffices to hinder the use of reason, than to destroy life: since we observe that many ailments deprive one of the use of reason, before depriving one of life. Nevertheless fear and anger cause very great harm to the body, by reason of the sorrow which they imply, and which arises from the absence of the thing desired.” In essence, Aquinas points to the complex relations that exist among the emotions, and that in the case of anger and fear, there is the concomitant experience of sorrow that these two emotions carry with them by their very nature, anger, insofar as one reacts against the evil which has visited one (every act of anger proceeds out of the experience of sorrow, that some evil is present and afflicts one, and that one has decided to rise up against it in anger and by so doing, hope to defeat it, see *ST I–II*, q. 46–8), and fear, insofar as one experiences the future real evil to come right now in a cognitional way (every act of fear recognizes the presence of evil to one cognitively speaking, and that fear bespeaks one’s concern that this evil approaches, threatens, that it may actually come and settle in one’s life. Thus, one fears the rising tide of intolerance against Christians insofar as one is cognitively exposed now to this evil yet to come. Thus, every fear arises out of a cognitively induced sorrow, see *ST I–II*, qq. 41–44; and Loughlin, “The Complexity of *timor*”). He continues: “Moreover, sorrow too sometimes deprives man of the use of reason: as may be seen in those who through sorrow become a prey to melancholy or madness.”

³¹ See *ST I–II*, q. 27, a. 4.

the sorrow that arises from considering the absence of virtue in the world, of good politicians, of justice, or the like), the absence of good is at best secondary to and derivative of the experience of sorrow. For, properly speaking, the presence of evil is far more immediate and efficacious than good's absence insofar as the presence of an evil has a far greater impact in the experience of sorrow itself than does the reasoned consideration upon, or the imagination of, a missing good. Thus, sorrow will be far more greatly experienced in the face of injustice than in considering or imagining the lack of justice.³² Nonetheless, since all emotion derives from love, our sorrows are intimately bound up with the quality of our loves and our desires. For example, if our love is set upon virtue and we desire it greatly to be realized among our co-workers, friends, relatives, citizens, and so on, then our sorrow inevitably addresses the lack of it among these people. Furthermore, when we see that the desire we have for a particular good, in this example, virtue among our fellows, is far from ever being realized, our desire can also become the occasion for sorrow, namely, over the delay of our desired good for them. And in those rare instances where, desiring, for example, to see a friend progress in the way of virtue, who instead takes up a particular vice, or even betrays the love that you share with him, sorrow again is occasioned, this time by the good's entire removal, that good which we so desired, in which we now have lost all hope.³³ We also experience sorrow concerning the desires that we have for our own happiness and the perfection of our nature; so great is the desire for such, and yet how daunting is the task in acquiring and rightly ordering the goods of fortune, the body, and the soul, particularly in light of the fact that there is much concerning our happiness that is out of our direct control. If hope is maintained throughout, then our desire for these things gives us pleasure. But, as soon as hope is lost, then our pleasure turns to sorrow.³⁴ In essence, though, the primary cause of sorrow is simply evil, present to our lives, afflicting us, and overpowering us by its superior force. Thomas notes that there is a distinct danger in the fact that it is a superior force, in that, being so great, it might transform our initial resistance or repugnance to it into its own image, effectively eliminating the discord between the person and the evil, and producing instead a harmony between the two. In a word, this person now becomes what he hated, avoided, and sorrowed over previously. The sorrow has stopped, but at a great price. Thus, the familiar stories of those who, in the face of great difficulty occasioning great

³² *ST* I-II, q. 36, a. 1.

³³ *ST* I-II, q. 36, a. 2.

³⁴ *ST* I-II, q. 36, aa. 2-3.

harm, finally consent and give way to the stronger force, allowing it to consume them and leave them at peace.³⁵

Although this last point is rather dour, it need not be. For we can just as easily imagine one who, subjected to sorrow over the years, now faces the situation where it can be eliminated through the overpowering force of goodness in his life.³⁶ Now, there are several ways by which sorrow can be overcome and mitigated. Aquinas discusses pleasure (q. 35, aa. 3–6; and q. 38, a. 1), tears (q. 38, a. 2), the sympathy or compassion of one's friends (q. 38, a. 3), the contemplation of truth (q. 38, a. 4), and finally the application of sleep and baths (q. 38, a. 5).

In general, any and all pleasure softens the experience of sorrow. For pleasure can be described as a repose (*quies*) of the appetite in a suitable good, while sorrow can be seen as a sort of appetitive weariness (*fatigatio*) or sickness (*aegritudine*) in the face of an unsuitable evil. Thus, the analogy: As repose is opposed to weariness with respect to the body, so too are pleasure and sorrow opposed with respect to the sensitive appetite. And just as the body is relieved by any and all rest, so too is sorrow mitigated by any and all pleasure.³⁷ Nonetheless, care must be taken here to examine what is the cause of one's sorrow, and not to treat of sorrow simply by means of anything pleasurable; the effects of sorrow are not to be mistaken for its cause. Throughout his discussion of sorrow, Thomas is careful to note that a degree of sorrow can in fact be considered good, particularly as it causes one to take note of, perhaps, a character flaw to which one would not normally have attended were it not for the presence of sorrow in one's life directly caused by and, thus, pointing to this

³⁵ *ST I–II*, q. 36, a. 4, and replies to the objections. This is appropriately rendered in the film concerning St. Thomas More, *A Man for All Seasons*, with respect to those who refused to stand against the injustice perpetrated by King Henry VIII, especially Richard Rich who betrays Thomas More for a political position.

³⁶ This is a popular theme in literature that is beautifully exemplified in the character of Colin in the children's book *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

³⁷ *ST I–II*, q. 38, a. 1. As a side note, in his reply to obj. 3, Thomas considers the situations where one took pleasure in the things of a particular friendship which now have become the cause of sorrow with the friend's death. Indeed, Aquinas admits, we have two opposed movements, one to pleasure with respect to the things that were shared in common, and the other to the sorrow occasioned by the fact that the friend is no longer here to enjoy these things with us. However, the stronger movement of pleasure, in the end, will prevail "since the perception of the present moves more strongly than the memory of the past, and since love of self is more persistent than love of another." Thus, with respect to the mitigation of sorrow, pleasure, being the stronger movement, is very important in bringing the person around, as they say. See also *ST I–II*, q. 35, a. 6.

defect in the first place. In the wider context of the Christian's faith, the pain and sorrow of this life can help in guiding him to attend to those things that keep him from a fuller relationship with God, or even from attaining to his heavenly homeland.³⁸ Consequently, some pains and sorrows are to be endured insofar as they have either a redemptive or restorative quality, and the use of pleasurable things as mitigating agents must have this consideration in mind from the start. Only the reflective man does this, one who has a deeper awareness of his humanity, and the purpose of his living. In the absence of such considerations, the non-reflective grasp at any pleasure to relieve their suffering, treating the symptoms instead of their cause.³⁹

Tears, and other outward expressions of sorrow, can also soften the impact of sorrow. For they have the effect of turning the *intentio* of one's person to outward concerns and considerations, of dispersing one's attention to these, rather than allowing it to concentrate upon the evil that is present, thus causing the sufferer to turn inward upon himself and feed the closing, weighting, and consuming effects of sorrow as noted previously.⁴⁰ But if the expression of sorrow is not moderated, then it loses its efficacy, and only serves to deepen one's sorrow. Thus, just as it is with pleasure, so too with one's tears, one must seek the true cause of one's sorrow and not indulge in those things that initially ameliorate its effects.⁴¹

Our friends, and the communities in which we find ourselves, are very potent forces in the mitigation of our sorrow, particularly as they, in feeling our pain with us, are perceived by us who suffer to share the burden that weighs us down and thus lighten our load and, by consequence, our sorrow too.⁴² More to the point, however, is that when our friends share our suffering, we experience, in a very direct and real fashion, their love for us. This, indeed, gives us much pleasure. Since pleasure softens our sorrow, then friends condoling with us soften our sorrow directly. Although it may

³⁸ See Aquinas's *Sermon 7 (Beata gens)*. Consider Loughlin, "The Complexity of *timor*," for a discussion along the same lines with respect to fear.

³⁹ *ST I-II*, q. 35, a. 3, and replies to the objections. It is very common in the face of great sorrows to indulge excessively in the pleasures of the flesh, particularly those connected with alcohol. The danger of this, however, is highlighted in Thomas's discussion of sloth below.

⁴⁰ *ST I-II*, q. 38, a. 2.

⁴¹ *ST I-II*, q. 38, a. 2, ad 2. Indeed it is a common experience that tears can be taken too far, and that once immoderately experienced, can in fact defeat their mitigating qualities and, in some cases, can even deepen one's sorrow.

⁴² It is interesting to note that although Thomas considers such language as metaphorical, it nonetheless endures to this day as a description of the chief effect of sorrow, as well as the images surrounding it concerning its alleviation.

be the case that we might be pained to see our friends affected by our own sorrow, nonetheless, the witness of their love is by far the greater experience and, consequently, overcomes any pain we might experience because of their condolence.⁴³

Given our rational nature, it comes as no surprise that Thomas considers the contemplation of truth itself to be a strong factor in the mitigation of sorrow. Our very nature is properly characterized by the capacity to reason and to choose freely, and this capacity touches upon every other aspect of our living, both sensitive and vegetative. Since our rationality is the highest aspect of our being, engagement in this, in all aspects of our living, constitutes the very perfection of our nature, and thus is vital to our happiness. Consequently, the highest pleasure we can engage in with respect to our humanity is that one connected with the search for wisdom, particularly as experienced by philosophers, theologians, and Christians, generally considered.⁴⁴ Since pleasure mitigates sorrow, this greatest of pleasures will most effectively drive out whatever sorrow we may suffer. And so, as Thomas states, “In the midst of tribulations, men rejoice in the contemplation of divine things and of future beatitude,”⁴⁵ as is recounted throughout Scripture, and in the lives and even the martyrdom of the saints. This pleasure, being so great and perfective of our being, “overflows”⁴⁶ into the other aspects of our person, even, in some cases, to the level of the senses. Thus, we have the stories of the saints who, in great pain under torture, had their suffering greatly mitigated, and even, in some cases, eliminated, by their contemplation of divine things. One should note, however, that such a state is possible either as these people have directly received this gift from God or, more commonly, as they have actively engaged themselves in the life of contemplation, have thirsted for this knowledge, and have habituated their entire beings and living to this pursuit. In general, though, the contemplation of truth can affect a great uplifting of the spirit and effectively counter, to varying degrees, the weighting effect of sorrow.⁴⁷

⁴³ *ST I-II*, q. 38, a. 3.

⁴⁴ See *ST I-II*, q. 3.

⁴⁵ *ST I-II*, q. 38, a. 4. “Homines ex contemplatione divina et futurae beatitudinis, in tribulationibus gaudent.”

⁴⁶ *ST I-II*, q. 38, a. 4, ad 3: “in viribus animae fit *redundantia* a superiori ad inferius. Et secundum hoc, delectatio contemplationis, quae est in superiori parte, *redundat* ad mitigandum etiam dolorem qui est in sensu.” Aquinas understandably uses this language in keeping with his view of the unity of the human person, namely, that all aspects of the person are for the sake of the whole which itself works for the sake of his ultimate end, namely, happiness.

⁴⁷ *ST I-II*, q. 38, a. 4.

Finally, the mitigation of sorrow by means of sleep and baths. Given that sorrow is properly a human phenomenon and, thus, something proper to our soul, one would think that sleep and baths are rather pointless, addressing the body alone. Furthermore, they interfere with the effectiveness of the previously discussed mitigating factors, particularly the contemplation of truth. Finally, even though sorrow has a very specific bodily involvement in its realization, sleep and baths affect other aspects of one's body not connected with sorrow (tired eyes, sore back, tired aching limbs, and the like).⁴⁸ This article, and the objections with which it concerns itself, are important insofar as Thomas considers mitigating factors of sorrow from a material perspective; the article is clearly not just about sleep and baths. Consequently, the article's question could be put in more modern terms, namely, whether intervention at the bodily level can effectively mitigate sorrow.

In his response, Thomas reminds us of his discussion in the *Summa theologiae* I–II, question 37, article 4, that sorrow, by its very nature, is directly opposed to the vital force and life of the body itself. Thus, in a very general way, whatever restores the body to its right and natural condition is opposed to sorrow and, thus, mitigates it. Now, if sleep and baths, or any other intervention directed at the materiality of our person, can effectively protect, reinforce, or even rectify the health of the body, then such can mitigate the effects of sorrow not only with respect to their material manifestation, but to some degree the experience of it with respect to the soul, insofar as these material interventions cause pleasure, a proven mitigating factor with respect to sorrow. In a broader perspective, then, in addition to sleep and baths, one might add exercise, good clean air, pure water, a good diet, therapeutic massages, and varied forms of entertainment to the list, anything that addresses the body and helps it with the demands placed upon it by the experience of sorrow. Finally, there are whatever medications available that effect a balancing, in Thomas's terms, of the humors, or, in our language, of the chemistry and biological processes involved in our affectivity.⁴⁹ Such medications, of course, were not available in Thomas's day. Thus, any intervention at the material level had to be one that indirectly addressed the problem. Most effective, it seems, would be sleep and baths, insofar as they have an obvious restorative effect upon the body, but

⁴⁸ See *ST* I–II, q. 38, a. 5, obj. 1–3.

⁴⁹ For a general discussion concerning Thomas's medical knowledge and the role it plays in his thought, see Mark Jordan, "Medicine and Natural Philosophy in Aquinas," in *Miscellanea Mediaevalia Veröffentlichungen des Thomas-Instituts der Universität zu Köln*, vol. 19, *Thomas Von Aquin—Werk und Wirkung im Licht neuerer Forschungen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 233–46.

also as they disperse the *intentio* of our person to things other than the present evil, sleep most effectively of the two.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the overall tenor of the article suggests that if there were a way to address the specific bodily changes involved in sorrow, then this would be the better way to proceed, rather than depend upon the indirect means offered by Thomas's time. The medications of our time are said to do just this. Whether this is the case, the fact still remains that Thomas would consider a drug targeting the very center of the body's involvement in sorrow as a particularly strong mitigating factor of sorrow's effects, but still as something which addresses only the symptoms, and not sorrow's underlying causes. The remedy for sorrow, in Aquinas's view, is not a material one. Rather, it is one that must address importantly our very humanity, both in itself and in relation to the way by which we perfect this through our living.

We see this most clearly in how Aquinas treats the morality of sorrow, and of sloth, a species of sorrow he discusses at length in the *Summa theologiae* II–II, question 35, as it develops into a vice contrary to charity. With respect to the first, one might ask why Thomas would consider the morality of sorrow in this context. For the series of questions concerning sorrow have gone from its nature, to its causes, effects, and finally to its mitigating forces. Question 39 thus seems somewhat out of place in this psychological context. I do not think it sufficient to say that Thomas treats the morality of sorrow because of the broader moral purposes of the *prima secundae*, the part of the *Summa theologiae* in which this discussion of sorrow takes place. Such an answer would only give rise to the question “then what is a psychological treatment of sorrow, and of the emotions as such, doing in the *prima secundae*?” The better answer lies in the fact that Thomas does not consider sorrow, or any of the emotions, as events properly and primarily treated of by the medical arts. As we have seen, sorrow is not of the body. Nor is it to be identified with its associated physical manifestations, or with the effects that result from these. Pain, taken in its proper sense as described above, is the concern of the medical arts. Sorrow, on the other hand, addresses the person with respect to his humanity insofar as he, through sensitive appetite, seeks to escape from the presence of some evil in his life. Consequently, the means whereby sorrow is best addressed is to try to ameliorate the initial effects of sorrow, but this for the purpose of getting past the symptoms to the underlying causes of it. In this respect, Thomas considers a moral approach as that which most appropriately addresses sorrow at its very

⁵⁰ However, one might consider baths in the larger context of the practice of sending people suffering from depressive disorders to a health spa, or to natural springs, something still practiced today.

roots, and hopes to eliminate it, and not just soften the blow as the mitigating agents seek to accomplish. It is with this in mind that we can understand why such a question appears in the midst of psychological considerations, and further, why such questions pepper the entire treatise of the emotions. Sorrow must be considered primarily as something that afflicts us with respect to our very humanity, and not something to be restricted to our body or material condition alone.⁵¹

And so, considered in itself, all sorrow is evil in its very nature as it is deleterious to the body, the sensitive appetite, a person's peace, character, and the vital energy that animates his being. However, within the context of a person's living, sorrow can exhibit a goodness. First, it is good that, in the presence of something evil, we experience sorrow. So, if one were not brought to sorrow concerning the moral condition of the majority of politicians, particularly those who profess that they are Catholics but do not act in accordance with the teachings of the Church in the discharge of their duties as politicians, then this would reflect badly upon one's character, since the lack of sorrow in this case would indicate that one has judged that such a situation is not an evil and that it is quite appropriate to establish a divide between one's moral and religious views and the running of one's country.⁵² In this light, Thomas affirms that it is a sign of one's own goodness that one is sorrowed by that which is evil, that it is a good thing that we are shamed, for example, by the base acts that we have

⁵¹ The latter is very much characteristic of modern approaches to the phenomenon, and fits nicely with a Cartesian and/or materialist view of the human person (the one, identifying the body as the source of all emotion, the other, seeing the human person as nothing other than his body). Nonetheless, Aquinas cannot be read in either way with respect to his views concerning human nature. For a detailed account of these issues, as well as an intelligent recounting of Thomas's view concerning the human person, see chapter 6 of Eleonore Stumpf, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), which is a re-working of a paper titled "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism without Reductionism," *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995): 505–31.

⁵² Recall, though, what was said earlier concerning the overtaking of one by the very evil that has afflicted one and has effected such a change in one's view of the suitable and the good that now such a one is no longer sorrowed by these matters. In this regard, consider, for example, a person who, having been criticized both explicitly and implicitly for holding that there should be an intimate relation between a politician's personal moral stances and the discharge of his public duties, might be overcome by the ferocity of both the attack and the sorrow that results, and gives over to the argument, and thus stops experiencing his former sorrow, and in fact begins to take pleasure in his new position. Such a person has been overcome by the very evil that has afflicted him, and been consumed and formed in its image. The lack of sorrow is indicative of this, a bad thing, as Thomas has just argued.

committed, that we feel the sorrow attached to guilt for the injustices that we have visited upon others, and so on.⁵³ For in the experience of sorrow, we not only indicate that there is goodness within us with respect to the very sorrow itself, but also that there is now an opportunity for rectification of that situation which brought about the sorrow in the first place. In this regard, then, sorrow is not only a good thing, it is also something quite fitting to our nature as moral beings, that is, as beings who are directed, by our humanity, to the acquiring of those goods perfective of this humanity as such (*bonum honestum*). Sorrow experienced indicates both the perception that something is evil, as well as its rejection. However, it only becomes a fitting good insofar as one's reason and will are rectified by that which is true and good respectively. In other words, in the virtuous whose minds are informed, as Pieper puts it, by "the truth of all things" and whose wills have been so trained to seek good and detest evil readily so as to eliminate the latter from their lives, sorrow becomes a powerfully suitable experience in the ridding of this evil as such.⁵⁴ In this regard, sorrow becomes a useful good (*bonum utile*), in that we seek not only to avoid the experience of sorrow in the first place and all of its deleterious effects noted previously, but also insofar as it helps us avoid things which are evil in themselves, or those which can be easily abused.⁵⁵ Finally, given the importance of sorrow in this regard, one is not to consider it, or even pain, as the greatest of evils. For it would be worse, (1) not to consider something as evil that really was; (2) not to reject it as evil when discovered to be so; and (3) to be separated from that which is truly good.⁵⁶

With respect, secondly, to the vice of sloth (*acedia*), we have an example of how sorrow, if not attended to by a mind rectified by truth and wisdom and a will by goodness and justice, can deform the very heart, mind, and, ultimately, the character and soul of a person. In brief, then, sloth begins as a sorrow that is so burdensome to the mind that one so oppressed is strongly disinclined to activity. As was said earlier, the evil situation from which one suffers becomes so bad, and the anxiety so intense, that even one's limbs, speech, and other activities are hindered in their operations, even to the point of paralysis. The vice, however, is something far more insidious. One becomes so weary of activity that this even extends to the doing of good deeds, particularly those of a spiritual

⁵³ *ST I-II*, q. 39, a. 1.

⁵⁴ *ST I-II*, q. 39, a. 2. See also Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), the first essay titled "The Truth of All Things."

⁵⁵ *ST I-II*, q. 39, a. 3.

⁵⁶ *ST I-II*, q. 39, a. 4.

nature.⁵⁷ In this respect, Thomas describes *acedia* as a vice that has at its core the rejection of spiritual goods, particularly of the divine good itself.⁵⁸ It despises spiritual goods for many reasons; they are difficult, burdensome to the body, hinder the body's comfort, pleasure, and repose. However, the central reason is far graver than these. At the heart of *acedia* lies, as Pieper so well describes it, a

deliberate turning away from, an actual fleeing from God. Man flees from God because God has exalted human nature to a higher, a divine, state of being and has thereby enjoined on man a higher standard of obligation. *Acedia* is, in the last analysis, a "*detestatio boni divini*" (*De malo*, 8, 1), with the monstrous result that, upon reflection, man expressly wishes that God had not ennobled him but had "left him in peace" (*ST II-II*, q. 35, a. 3). . . Sloth is man's joyless, ill-tempered, and narrow-mindedly self-seeking rejection of the nobility of the children of God with all the obligations it entails. . . Man will not be what God wants him to be.⁵⁹

Such a vice is to be considered a capital fault insofar as it destroys the spiritual life, particularly as this destruction is brought about by one's consent "in the abhorrence, horror, and detestation of the divine good."⁶⁰ In the grips of this vice, sloth deforms one's character to such an extent that it gives rise to malice, spite, timidity, despair, a sluggish indifference concerning the commandments, and the wandering of the mind to illicit matters.⁶¹

⁵⁷ *ST II-II*, q. 35, a. 1.

⁵⁸ *ST II-II*, q. 35, a. 2.

⁵⁹ Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, and Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 119–20. Furthermore, he likens *acedia* to an "anxious vertigo that befalls the human individual when he becomes aware of the height to which God has raised him. One who is trapped in *acedia* has neither the courage nor the will to be as great as he really is. He would prefer to be less great in order thus to avoid the obligation of greatness. *Acedia* is a perverted humility; it will not accept supernatural goods because they are, by their very nature, linked to a claim on him who receives them. Something similar exists in the sphere of mental health and illness. The psychiatrist frequently observes that, while a neurotic individual may have a superficial will to be restored to health, in actuality he fears more than anything else the demands that are made, as a matter of course, on one who is well" (119).

⁶⁰ *ST II-II*, q. 35, a. 3. "Quandoque vero pertingit usque ad rationem, quae consentit in fugam, et horrorem, et detestationem boni divini."

⁶¹ "Malitia, rancor, pusillanimitas, desperatio, torpor circa praecepta, evagatio mentis circa illicita" (*ST II-II*, q. 36, a. 4, ad 2). See Aquinas's response to this objection for a detailed description of this vice as it plays itself out in the life of one given over to it. In short, from the experience of sorrow, one shuns whatever causes it and passes over to that which gives pleasure. Thus, those who sorrow over spiritual matters pass to the pleasures of the flesh (wandering of the mind to illicit

The robustness of Thomas's views concerning sorrow is evident. He examines not only the general nature of *tristitia*, but offers detailed descriptions concerning that with which it deals, its different manifestations, the effects that it has upon one's entire person, the ways by which it might be effectively mitigated, and implicit views concerning the proper means to be used in its eradication, and this, not in an absolute way, that is, with a view only to the elimination of one's sorrow, but relative to the individual with respect to his nature, destiny, and happiness; some sorrow is good insofar as it has both a redemptive quality (in relation to the Christian's experience of it) or, at the very least, a restorative quality with respect to one's character and moral being.

When one examines not just sorrow, but any of the eleven basic emotions, one will find this peculiarly moral aspect, peculiar, that is, to modern ears. For we do not commonly associate or conduct the treatment of our affective state in moral terms, but rather proceed in medical ones, seeing our affectivity as a manifestation of our materiality, and thus as something which must be treated in this way, namely, by way of medication. Even those areas of psychiatry and psychology which treat of the cognitive contributions to the affective life regard these as yet further means whereby one's materiality may be addressed. In short, cognitive approaches to therapy are considered effective only insofar as they affect the material or the bodily. Now, this is understandable when one considers what are the implicit views held today concerning human nature. For the most part, people, even the learned outside the fields of philosophy and theology, do not hold well-articulated views concerning the nature of the human person. On the one hand, there are the varied forms of eliminative or non-eliminative psychological materialism (the default position for many of those in the sciences or who are secularly minded)

matters). Such a man avoids the end of the spiritual life (despair), as well as the difficult means whereby it is attained (timidity). He displays no care for justice (sluggish indifference concerning the commandments), is indignant with and struggles against good men who lead others to spiritual goods (spite), and even detests these spiritual goods themselves (malice). The response to objection 3 adds bitterness (*amaritudo*) to spite as the latter's effect, idleness and drowsiness (*otiositas et somnolentia*) to laziness, and uneasiness of mind, curiosity, verbosity, restlessness of body, and instability (*importunitas mentis, curiositas, verboritas, inquietudo corporis, instabilitas*) to the wandering of the mind to illicit matters. One should also consider Josef Pieper's description of these *filiae acediae*, "the companions and peers" of sloth, found on pages 120–22 of *Faith, Hope, and Love*. Finally, the reader may want to consider an article from the Summer 2004 edition of the journal *Communio* (vol. 31) which deals with the nature of *acedia* in detail, namely, Jean-Charles Nault's "Acedia: Enemy of Spiritual Joy," 236–58.

or some form of dualism (mostly those who have had some religious training or who have not taken on the various forms of skepticism common in learned circles).⁶² Both generally see the affective life as something restricted to the body or, importantly, centered upon the chemistry, genetics, and physiology involved in emotion. Again, a sign of this is the prevalent way in which emotional disorders are treated today, namely, by means of medication. Even when those within the fields of psychiatry and psychology recognize that medication is not enough, they are stymied with respect to alternative solutions, again, because they are, for the most part, incapable of escaping the models of human nature they have inherited, being children of Descartes and, thus, heir to a metaphysical tradition which makes it extremely difficult for them to conceive of views of human nature other than those of psychological monism and dualism.⁶³ Thomas, however, focuses *not* upon the soul or the body, but rather upon the human person himself who is comprised of these things. Consequently, given the centrality of the human person in his discussions concerning every and any psychological phenomenon, in our case the emotions, his main emphasis will be upon the person himself who experiences them, and this within the primary context of that in which one

⁶² For a basic discussion of these positions, plus that of psychological idealism, or phenomenism, see Richard Double, *Beginning Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 101–31.

⁶³ For a discussion of how this problem even plagues the philosophical and theological communities, see Stumpf, *Aquinas*, chapter 6. Take special note of the way by which she formulates an alternative view descriptive of Aquinas's model of human nature. Also, see Amélie O. Rorty, "Aristotle on the Metaphysical Status of *Pathé*," *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (March 1984): 521–46, for a discussion concerning a related problem, namely, that in the face of having lost the metaphysic of a prior age, one cannot fully or properly understand the terms and concepts inherited from them, terms and concepts that continue to exert a heavy influence upon how we currently conduct our discussions and understand the things with which they deal. Rorty discusses this point in light of the *pathé*, but what is developed here could easily be applied to other matters concerning the soul, human nature, and so on. It is rarely recognized how the language we use in many philosophical and theological debates was originally developed in ancient and medieval times, and that the notions this language signifies, the context in which we speak on certain issues, and the relations established between these notions and contexts, continue to be heavily influenced by a metaphysic that is quite distinct from the one in which we work and think today. A recovery of an understanding of the metaphysic from which these terms and concepts arose is the only way by which we can bring clarity to the confusion of debate today. To try to conduct the discussion within a metaphysic foreign to the genesis and development of these terms and concepts is to condemn oneself to the many impasses that we experience today in both philosophy and theology.

finds the fullness of one's humanity, that is, within the ethical context which has as its goal the acquisition and enjoyment of happiness. Within this context, the physiological, and the psychological both find their homes, and only in this context would it make sense to ask about the morality of the emotions, their goodness and badness, and whether the most damaging of them, namely, sorrow, can have any benefit to the human person himself and, thus, be something which one must endure and *not* eliminate by any and every means. Such an approach makes no sense within a metaphysic that centers itself upon the utter materiality of the human person and the lack of any transcendence to his being.

Sorrow is a specifically human experience made possible by the fact that we, in our animality, are not condemned to such, but rather enjoy our animality within a life completely imbued by reason. The length, the breadth, and the quality of our suffering are possible only insofar as reason encompasses and qualifies every other aspect of our being. It is because of my reason that I can go beyond my external pains and suffer in a new way, namely, internally without any *laesio* being present to the eye, and at any depth to which the evil that afflicts can take me. It is because of my rationality that I can take a phenomenon like sorrow and experience its species in relation to the varied difficulties of my life. It is because of my reason and will that I can alleviate my suffering by choosing the means whereby it can be mitigated by addressing its bodily manifestations or by engaging in specifically human endeavors so as to eradicate the evil present in my life and, thus, experience the relief that joy brings. Finally, it is because I am a being endowed with the capacity to determine myself in light of what I know that I can develop my sorrow and, through a series of misadventures, nurture it until it manifests whatever vice can be associated with it (in our example above through the vice of sloth).

Based, then, upon the description that Aquinas offers of sorrow, and the depths to which one may sink with respect to it, it is a fair thing to say that Aquinas does indeed articulate a robust notion of depression, one which speaks directly and intelligently to the human condition, to the real experience of it, and beyond it to the frightening depths to which it can plunge a person who is not careful to prevent the overwhelming and transforming effects that sorrow brings with it.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, Aquinas

⁶⁴ Consider the most common descriptions associated with depression: a loss of energy and interest in the things of daily life, especially with respect to the enjoyment that one used to take in things formerly pleasurable, including food and rest; great difficulties in concentration; an overwhelming experience of indecisiveness; a confusion of and slowness to one's thinking; an exaggerated affect; feelings of

might object to the way in which we have signified the phenomenon, saying that it is misnamed insofar as the naming of it is centered upon one of its chief effects (*aggravatio*), and not with respect to its essential notion, namely, the *cause* of this being weighed down by the real presence and affliction of evil. In this light, one can understand why Thomas would begin with the generic notion of pain, discern its species (internal and external), and then rename the properly human experience of pain so that one might better understand the notion to which the word points, rather than import the effects associated with pain into the discussion of the essence of the experience itself. Oddly enough, it is by avoiding this immediate importation that Aquinas puts a more human face upon the experience, concentrating not upon what we share with the other animals, but seeking out rather its particular manifestation in a rational being. Thus, the renaming of the phenomenon of internal pain suggests that its manifestation in a human life might require a different approach to that of external pain, that perhaps the medical arts need to be extended further to include the contributions that can be made by the philosopher and the theologian, specifically as these two arts are those which treat of the human person in their fullness, and this in relation to the richness of reality itself, and the purpose for which we live. Sorrow, then, and depression particularly, becomes for Aquinas a metaphysical, moral, and spiritual concern with respect to its genesis, progression, and termination, and not just simply an event of the body itself.⁶⁵ N.V

worthlessness, even to the point of considering death and/or suicide. See the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)* of the American Psychiatric Association under “depression” for descriptions of this kind.

⁶⁵ This is not to say that philosophers and theologians are blind to those situations where the underlying reason for an emotional disorder is simply a defect in one’s physiology, genetics, or chemical balances. Nor are they blind to the fact that a disorder, once experienced, can habituate the body to a specific way of feeling, and thus take on a life of its own. Such, they would say, would have to be judged on a case-by-case basis, requiring a diverse team of individuals working together to help alleviate the suffering of the individual in question by the means discovered to be most appropriate to the situation. Nonetheless, they would insist that the discussion, judgment, and treatment take place within the categories discussed throughout this article, that is, with an eye solidly fixed upon the nature of our affectivity in light of our very human nature, purpose, and happiness. Anything less does an extreme disservice to the one who suffers.

Spousal Love in the Medieval Rite of Marriage

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NOTWITHSTANDING substantial studies to the contrary, it remains commonplace among specialists in literature, in Church history, and historical theology, as also with the more popular mind, that the patristic and medieval Church had little regard for marriage as a bond of love between husband and wife. In the theology and preachment of the early and medieval Church, as is commonly believed, romance was disdainfully ignored, the love-play of passion forbidden outside of marriage and barely tolerated within it, and the use of sex “excused” only when conjugal procreation was the intention. As St. Paul had put it, it was better to marry than to burn. All “burning” before marriage was evil, and afterward, hopefully, the marriage would by its very nature extinguish it altogether. Marriage was indeed necessary to keep one from grave sin (fornication, adultery), but it was virginity or celibacy as lived out within religious life that made for virtue and brought one close to God. So deeply rooted was this teaching, it is claimed, that it endured until the last ecumenical council when the Church finally caught up (almost) with the rest of the world and seriously acknowledged the goodness and dignity of marriage and granted that there is more to it than the begetting and rearing of children.¹

¹ Some seventy years ago, C. S. Lewis accepted and applied to the study of medieval life and literature the prevalent opinion above summarized: “The general impression left on the medieval mind by its official teachers [clergy] was that all love—at least all such passionate and exalted devotion as a courtly poet thought worthy of the name—was more or less wicked. Thus if the Church tells them that the ardent lover of his own wife is in mortal sin, they presently reply with the rule that true love is impossible in marriage.” See *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936, 1958), 17–18. Lewis here was one with a plethora of studies before and during his time pointing up the negativity of the medieval Church’s attitude

Whatever the evidence for the above may be, the medieval marriage liturgy tells a different tale. Here in its liturgy, if anywhere, we might expect to find the Church's teaching on marriage (*lex orandi, lex credendi*) as distinct from that of individuals or schools of theology.² In the present article I should like to single out several medieval liturgies as illustrative of the Church's regard for and praise of marriage precisely as a love bond, physical as well as spiritual, between a man and a woman. As my examples I have chosen liturgies prominent in late pre-reformation England.³

toward marriage as a bond of love, for example, H. C. Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy* (London: 1907, 1966); E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage* (New York: Allerton Book Company, 1922). For recent similar though variously nuanced views on the Church and spousal love see, among many others, Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); James Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Eric Fuchs, *Sexual Desire and Love: Origins and History of Sexuality and Marriage* (New York: James Clarke Company, 1983); Margaret Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); Uta Ranke-Heinemann, *Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven: Women, Sexuality, and the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1990). For relatively early views arguing the Church's positive attitude toward spousal love, see S. Pinckaers, OP, "Ce que le Moyen Age pensait du mariage," *La Vie Spirituel* 82 (1967): 413–40 and my *Love and Marriage in Church and Poetry: Late Medieval England* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1968); and my two articles, "Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages" (parts 1 and 2) *New Blackfriars* 50 (1969): 599–608 and 649–60. For recent studies uncovering much of the Church's positive stance on marriage specifically as love-bond in the early Fathers through St. Bernard and Hugh of St. Victor, see the essays by Glenn W. Olsen and Teresa Olsen Pierre in *Christian Marriage: A Historical Study*, ed. Glenn W. Olsen (New York: Crossroad, 2001); also C. Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

² "Any study of late medieval religion must begin with the liturgy, for within that great seasonal cycle of fast and festival, of ritual observance and symbolic gesture, lay Christians found the paradigms and the stories which shaped their perception of the world and their place in it" (Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993], 11). Yet in the matter of our particular concern the liturgy has not only not begun the various studies of marriage but has scarcely appeared in them. A happy exception is Glenn Olsen's chapter titled "Marriage in Barbarian Kingdom and Christian Court," in Olsen, *Christian Marriage*.

³ For the marriage liturgies I have used "Manuale et Processionale ad Usus Insignis Ecclesiae Eboracensis," ed. W. G. Henderson, from the *Publications* of the Surtees Society, 1875, vol. 63, containing the rituals of York, Salisbury, and Hereford, together with extracts of ten other marriage services from the eighth to the fifteenth century. The manuscript of the York manual (fourteenth century) referred to in my quotations is in the University Library, Cambridge. It is one of four manuscripts used by Henderson in preparing his edition. For continental liturgical

I shall be as detailed in my presentation as needed without losing sight of the whole, since liturgies like poems must be experienced *overall* in order to be understood and appreciated. I will, along the way, cite some of the preaching and theology current with the liturgies selected to suggest that indeed as the Church worshiped it also believed.

Marriage in the Liturgy of York

In “the renowned Church of York” of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the marriage rite began before the church door with the following exhortation spoken by the priest in both Latin and English (*lingua moderna*, as the directive reads):

Lo, bretheren, we are comen here before God and his angels and all his halowes, in the face and presence of our moder holy Chyrche, for to couple and to knyght these two bodyes togyder, that is to saye, of this man and of this woman, that they be from this tyme forthe but one body and two soules in the fayth and lawe of God and holy Chyrche, for to deserue everlastyng lyfe, what someuer that they done here be fore.

I charge you on Goddes behalfe and holy Chirche, that if there be any of you that can say anythyng why these two may not lawfully be wedded togyder at this tyme, say it nowe outhur pryuely or appertly in helpynge of your soules and theirs bothe.

Also I charge you both and eyther be your selfe, as ye wyll answer before God at the day of dome, that yf there be any thyng done pryuely or openly between yourselfe, or that ye knowe any lawfule letting [hindrance] why that ye may nat be wedded togyder at thys tyme, say it nowe or [before] we do any more to this mater.

If there are no objections to the marriage the priest immediately puts to the bride and groom the following questions, again in Latin and English,

N., Wylt thou haue this woman to thy wyfe and loue her [and wirschipe hir—Cambridge manuscript] and keep her, in syknes and in helthe, and

rites covering a wide area of medieval Europe, see E. Marténe, *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus*, vol. 2 (Antwerp: 1763–4), liber I, pars ii, cap. ix, “De ritibus ad sacramentum Matrimonii pertinentibus.” For English translations of some thirty rites or parts thereof, including that of Sarum (Salisbury), see Mark Searle and Kenneth W. Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992). For an account of the formation of the liturgy of marriage in the western Church, see E. Schillebeeckx, OP, *Marriage: Secular Reality and Saving Mystery*, vol. 2 (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 33–149. In my citations of liturgical texts, I have adhered to Henderson’s transcriptions, though in a few instances I have updated orthography and grammar.

in all other degrese be to her as a husbunde sholde be to his wyfe, and all other forsake for her, and holde the only to her to thy lyues ende.

N., Wylt thou haue this man to thy husbunde, and be buxum [obedient] to hym [luf hym, obeye to him, and wirchipe hym—Cambridge manuscript], serue hym and kepe hym in sykenes and in helthe: and in all other degrees be unto him as a wyfe shulde be to hir husbunde, and all other to forsake for hym, and holde the only to hym to thy lyues ende.

Then each pronounces, this time only in the vernacular, the “form” which expresses his and her consent to the marriage and which, accordingly, makes the marriage:

Here I take the N. to my wedded wyfe [husbunde], to haue and to holde, at bedde and at borde, for fayer for fouler, for better for warse, in sekeness and in hele, tyl dethe us departe, and thereto I plight the me trouthe.

The ring ceremony follows, coupled with that of the giving of gold and silver, symbol of the woman’s dowry (*dos mulieris*). First the priest blesses the ring (in Latin):

Bless, Lord, this ring, which in your name we bless, that she who will wear it stand in your peace and remain in your will, and may she live and grow old in your love and be multiplied unto length of days.

Creator and preserver of human kind, giver of spiritual grace and bestower of eternal salvation, you, Lord, grant that your blessing come upon this your servant and this your handmaid, that armed with the strength of heavenly protection they may advance to eternal salvation.

The groom then takes the blessed ring, touches it to the first three fingers of the bride’s hand, saying “In the name of the Father, etc.,” and places it on the fourth finger because, as the rubric states, in that finger “is a certain vein going to the heart.” As he places the ring he repeats after the priest (*docente sacerdote*): “With this ryng I wedde the, and with this golde and siluer I honoure the, and with this gyft I dowe thee.” If the woman’s dowry is land, she is then to kneel before her husband. Otherwise she remains standing while the priest recites some verses from the psalms. He asks the congregation to pray for the couple and, in Latin, he himself prays for God’s blessing once again upon “these young ones” (*istos adolescentes*), “that they might remain in your security, live and grow old in your love, and be multiplied unto length of days.”

All now enter the church. The bride and groom prostrate themselves before the altar step (*ante gradum altaris*). The priest says some versicles and again (in Latin) prays God's blessing upon the young couple that they might be joined in true love:

All-powerful and eternal God, who by his power created Adam and Eve, sanctified them by his blessing, and joined them in community of love [*societate amoris copulavit*]; may He sanctify and bless your hearts and bodies and join them in truest love [*amorem verae dilectionis*].

Bride and groom rise and take their place in the south side of the sanctuary, the bride standing to the right of her husband, and the solemn mass of the Trinity is begun. There is an added oration, secret, and post-communion prayer for the spouses (the secret prayer speaks of the *sacra connubili lege*—the sacred law of marriage)⁴ and the epistle and gospel are special: the epistle (1 Cor 6:15–20) reminding the couple that their bodies are members of Christ, that they are two in one flesh, and therefore they are to avoid sin, especially that of fornication. They are to “glorify and carry God” in their bodies. The gospel (Jn 3:27–29) speaks of John the Baptist as the “friend of the groom” who rejoices when he hears the groom's voice. The gospel ends: “This joy of mine has been fulfilled in order that your joy be complete.”

At the breaking of the sacred bread, the spouses kneel before the altar and the *pallium* (sacred mantel) is held above them by two clerics. The priest turns and speaks over them three prayers, the middle prayer, the “sacramental blessing,” being omitted in the case of a second marriage (that is, when one or both are widowed). Here there is a long rubric explaining why second marriages are not to receive this blessing. It states that though a second (or third, etc.) marriage is a perfect sacrament (*perfectum sacramentum*), something is missing of the sacramental signification, namely, that of a single union between Christ and the Church. Besides, continues the rubric, one of the spouses will have received the blessing in a previous marriage, and so the other by becoming one flesh with the already blessed spouse will thereby share in it (*per carnem alias benedictam caro non benedicta, cum qua jungitur, benedicitur*). An exception is made for a second marriage in which the male is the widow and the bride a virgin. Here, it is argued, the full signification of the sacrament is preserved since the male represents Christ or the bishop who in a single union is wedded to many souls. In any case, the omission of the brief sacramental blessing is the sole noticeable difference in the whole wedding ceremony between

⁴ Not spelled out here, but expressed in the Hereford rite, as given below.

first and second marriages. The prayers said at this point (all in Latin) concentrate mainly upon the bride. We are reminded of the intimate and inseparable union established between man and woman from the beginning of creation, a union not abrogated either by original sin nor the Flood. Then God is asked to look kindly upon the bride, to keep her pure, chaste, innocent, wise, faithful, fruitful, of long life “and may she see her children’s children unto the third and fourth generation.”

At the conclusion of these prayers, the husband mounts the altar steps and receives the kiss of peace from the priest. He returns to his place and kisses his bride alone and she him alone, “and no one else” (*et neminem alium, nec ipse nec ipsa*). Immediately preceding the kiss of peace the priest recites the simple formula: “Hold to the bond of peace and charity, that you may be worthy of the holy mysteries of God”—apparently indicating thereby that the bride and groom are about to receive Holy Communion.⁵

The mass continues, concluding with the special nuptial postcommunion prayer: “We beseech you, almighty God, to accompany that which has been instituted by your providence for the sake of love [*pro amore*], that you may keep in lasting peace those whom you join in lawful communion [*legitima societate*].” Finally, “because of the solemnity of the sacrament” the priest is directed to give the last blessing with the chalice itself, saying:

Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, we humbly beseech you, that you kindly deign to nourish with your blessing the union of your servants. We ask you, almighty God, that the deceits of the enemy be thwarted, and that they, who by your providence have merited to be united, might imitate the holiness of the union itself.

That night (*nocte vero sequenti*) when the bride and groom have come into the bridal chamber, the priest enters and blesses the bed, saying: “Bless, Lord, this bridal chamber and all who dwell herein, that they may endure in your peace and remain in your will; and that they may live in your love and grow old and multiply unto the length of days.” A further brief prayer is prayed asking the protection of God’s holy angel upon the

⁵ There is no specific directive as to whether or not the bride and groom are to communicate, nor is there such a directive in any of the rituals that I have consulted. However, L. Duchesne in his *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution*, 4th English ed. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1912), 429, referring to Pope Nicholas I’s description of the rites of marriage in the Latin Church, claims the bride and groom did communicate. This certainly seems likely, judging from the solemnity of the occasion and the other privileges the bride and groom received in the nuptial Mass.

couple. The bride and groom are then blessed with the simple Trinitarian formula, and the chamber and bed are incensed.⁶ This ends the ecclesiastical ceremonies.

The Rites of Sarum, Hereford, Worcestershire

The Sarum, or Salisbury, nuptial liturgy was almost identical with that of York. The chief differences are to be found not so much in the printed editions of the Sarum rite as in the earlier fifteenth-century manuscript of that rite preserved in the library of St. John's College, Oxford. Here, in the manuscript, there is the directive that the woman be given in the first place to the Church. She is likewise to kneel and kiss the groom's right foot, whether there is land in the dowry or not. Also, while in the manuscript there is the rubric that the final blessing be given with the chalice, as at York, there is no mention of this in the printed editions. Other minor differences (in the printed editions) between the two rites are:

1. In the Sarum ritual there is the directive for the priest to speak the introductory words, admonition, and the initial questions "*in lingua materna,*" but whereas in the York manual the English is given, here we find only the Latin. However, the introduction and the rest are the same in content as those in the York manual.
2. The marriage *form* given in the vernacular, is slightly different for the man and woman, whereas in the York rite, it is the same for both. In the Sarum rite the woman adds: "to be bonere and buxum [good and obedient] in bedde and atte borde." And both the man and the woman add the words "if holy Churche it woll ordeyne" after "tyl dethe us departe."
3. The formula for giving the ring, the gold and the silver, is somewhat more elaborate in the Sarum rite: "With this ryng I the wed, and this gold and siluer I the geue, and with my bodi I the worshipe, and with all my worldely catel I thee endowe." The ceremony of the placing of

⁶ The same practice of blessing the newlyweds while sitting upon or lying in the marriage bed is to be found in the fourteenth-century marriage rite of the church of Paris. Here the priest is directed to incense the bridal chamber, and then the bride and groom "sitting or lying in their bed." Martène, *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus*, ordo x. R. Lewinsohn, in his *History of Sexual Customs* (London and New York: Harper & Bros., 1958), 183, reproduces a fifteenth-century woodcut of a bridal pair in bed receiving a blessing from a bishop. There are several others present, and a woman holds the pail for holy water. Chaucer makes use of the custom in "The Merchant's Tale": apparently January and May are under the covers "whan the bed was with the preest yblessed."

the ring is the same as at York, but with an addition in the rubrical commentary. After the words “in the fourth finger is a certain vein proceeding to the heart,” there is added an explanation of the symbolism of the gold and silver: “in the sonorous sound of silver is symbolized the internal love which must always be new [*recens*] between them.” It is at this point that the Sarum *manuscript* (not the printed edition) directs the bride to kneel before her husband and kiss his right foot.

4. The epistle is the same as at York, but the gospel is different—Matthew 19:2–6, in which Jesus upholds the inseparability of the marriage bond, since “they are no longer two, but one flesh.”
5. In the Sarum rite, immediately after the mass bread and wine are blessed with a prayer that recalls the miracles of the multiplication of the five loaves and the changing of water into wine. Of this bread and wine the newlyweds taste *in nomine domini*.
6. The blessing of the bridal chamber and bed is different from that of York, most noticeably in that here the last blessing is given while the couple are “in bed” or “on the bed” (*in lecto*). After the brief blessing, the final directive for the priest is: “These things done, let him asperse them with blessed water, and so depart and leave them in peace” (*dimittat eos in pace*).

Still another prominent English liturgy of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was that of the diocese of Hereford. Here the marriage rite, as it appears in the medieval Hereford missal, is similar to and often identical with the rites of York and Sarum. Some of its noteworthy and distinguishing features are as follows:

1. After the priest has inquired about the existence of any impediments, he is directed to announce to the bride and groom “the law of marriage . . . namely, that they shall be two in one flesh, and each obedient to the other [*uterque alteri obnoxius sit*] unto the keeping of each other in sickness or in health, and for no cause can they be separated.” This is in the *manuscript* Hereford missal (University College, Oxford); it does not appear in the printed version. It should be observed that in the manuscript the whole of the service till the end of the exchange of vows is quite markedly abridged. For example, the questions put to the couple are simply: “Man, do you wish to have this woman united to you? . . . Woman, do you wish to have this man united to you?” This may suggest that a certain spontaneity or orig-

inality of expression on both the part of the priest and the marrying couple was tolerated or even encouraged as long as the essential content of the various formulas was respected, much as occurs in present-day marriage ceremonies.

2. In the printed version of the missal, after the priest has inquired as to the freedom of the couple to marry, he asks the groom (the question is printed in Latin, but surely it was asked in English): “N., Do you wish to have this woman and receive her as your legitimate wife, and, in God’s fidelity and yours, keep her as a Christian man ought to keep his wife, in sickness and in health?” A like question is asked of the bride. Then, holding the bride’s right hand in his, the groom repeats after the priest “in the mother tongue”: “I, N., underfyng[e] [take] the N., for my wedded wife, for betere for worse, for richer for porer, yn sekene & in helthe, tyl deth us de–parte, as holy Churche hath ordeyned, & therto y plyghth the my trowthe.” The bride says the same, adding the phrase “to be buxum to the.”
3. In the giving of the ring, the gold and silver, the man is directed to say either in Latin or the mother tongue: “with this ring I thee wed, and with this gold and silver I thee endow; and with my body I thee honour.” The ring is placed as at York and Sarum. The rubric here contains a slightly varied explanation of the ceremony and gives the authoritative source for the explanation: “I ask why the ring is placed on the fourth finger counting the thumb, rather than on the second or third. Isidore says it is because a certain vein extends from that finger to the heart, and this gives us to understand the unity and perfection of love; xxx. quaest. v. cap. *Feminae in fine*.” This last is the particular work of St. Isidore referred to.⁷
4. As at York and Sarum, there is the mass of the Trinity, with the couple in the sanctuary throughout. The epistle and gospel are as at Sarum, and all else in the mass is as in the Sarum or York rituals. There is the blessing of the bread and wine “or some other potable good” after the final blessing has been imparted with the chalice, and husband and wife share them. In the evening the bridal bed and chamber are blessed with the same simple blessings as at York and Sarum. And again the final rubric is that the priest depart and leave husband and wife “in peace.”

⁷ The exact reference in Isidore is: “People first began to wear rings on the fourth finger from the thumb because from it a certain vein reaches to the heart” (*eo vena quaedam usque ad cor pertingat*). Isidore, *Etymologiarum*, lib. XIX, c. 32, P.L., 82, col. 701.

Finally, mention may be made of two prayers (in Latin) from the thirteenth-century missal of Hanley Castle, Worcestershire, which do not appear in the nuptial rites of York, Sarum, or Hereford, though the Hanley rite seems to be like the others in all other respects. The first of these prayers occurs immediately after the ring ceremony while all are still standing before the church door. It recalls God's institution and sanctification of marriage in the Old Testament, his being born of it and his blessing upon it in the New Testament; it asks God to bless and sanctify the present nuptials, to join the couple in true love (*verae dilectionis societate*), to give to them "peaceful corporal health, joy of mind and body, and the procreation of sons and daughters (*filiorum et filiarum*)."⁸ The prayer concludes: "After the labor of your life is ended, may He lead you into the community of holy angels and archangels in Heaven." The second prayer is spoken over the bride and groom as they lay prostrate before the altar, just before the mass of the Trinity is begun. It asks that God bless the couple "that they might be joined in conjugal union with equal effect, like mind, and mutual charity [*effectu compari, mente consimili, caritate mutua*] . . . and that each may prefer the other to oneself [*invicem se praeferant sibi*]."⁹

The Nuptial Homily

Such was the marriage ritual itself. Of a piece with it there was, of course, the homily, preached or read (perhaps from a common text) immediately after the initial greeting and admonitions and before the pronouncement of vows, as is the practice today.⁸ As with the theology, the medieval preaching in general has been found wanting in its appreciation of marriage and of woman in particular. Speaking of the harsh, negative attitude of the fourteenth-century English preachers generally, G. R. Owst, one of the pioneer students of the medieval pulpit, at one point laments: "Where alas is our merry England!"⁹ Elsewhere he indicts that same "gloom and doom" pulpit for its generous share in the English Reformation, claiming that "as its smarting children reared mainly through repression, through taunts and threats of future punishment, grew to an independent manhood and a wisdom of their own, they turned to mock, to threaten, and then to eject their own shortsighted parents."¹⁰ When Owst treats specifically of the pulpit as related to women and marriage,

⁸ For an overview of medieval preaching, cf. H. Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Noticeably absent from Spencer's study is any consideration of the nuptial homily.

⁹ *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), 384.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 234.

he seems to be drawing from an inexhaustible well of medieval invective and vituperation.

However, the medieval pulpit was much more kindly toward women and marriage than Owst's chapter on "the sermon of satire and complaint" might lead us to believe. As instanced below, the sermons of Robert de Sorbon and others, together with the many moral manuals such as the *Summae* of W. Peraldus and its multiple translations, which were meant to aid the preaching, are testimony as to the esteem in which both the woman and marriage were held. With regard to the Middle English sermons he had edited for the Early English Text Society, W. O. Ross observed that "In none of these sermons are women contemned; in fact it is pointed out at least three times that though Eve brought sin into the world, Mary brought salvation. . . . 'No man,' says one of the sermons, 'shuld have woman in dispite, for it is no wisdom to dispise what God loveth.'" ¹¹

Owst himself is ambivalent. Perhaps it is because he tried to see the preaching whole that we find in his histories almost as much contradiction as we find in the preaching itself. Thus after evidencing the bleakness of the medieval English pulpit, he goes on to tell of the "rollicking humor" and laughter of that same pulpit. He speaks of "our homilist now turned play writer," and finds the preacher's accent most clearly manifest in those very passages of medieval drama "which have been supposed hitherto to exhibit the birth of a native dramatic sense, uproarious with a people's mirth, fresh, realistic, and redolent of the soil."¹² As for the pulpit's treatment of woman and marriage, he cautions that the examples he cites are confined to one specific type of sermon, that of "satire and complaint," and, though only in a footnote, concedes that a "kindlier, fairer attitude is expressed . . . in the typical marriage sermon of the day," by which he means, supposedly, that preached at the nuptial liturgy.¹³

Two such "typical" sermons appear in manuscript Gg. vi, 16, housed in the Cambridge University Library. It seems likely that they were sermons actually preached sometime during the fifteenth century, and the several glosses on one of them (*In solemnizatione matrimonii*) suggest that it likewise served as a pattern or model sermon.¹⁴ Both are brief—perhaps

¹¹ *Middle English Sermons* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), lvii, and sermon 24.

¹² *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*, 488.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 385. The variety in both style and content of medieval preaching is further instanced in Owst's other major study: *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926).

¹⁴ For the fact and use of the model or closet sermon and collections thereof, see Spencer, *English Preaching*, 4, 75–76, 94.

of ten minutes speaking duration. I summarize and quote generously from each of them that not only their content but also their overall tone and spirit might be judged.¹⁵

The first—titled *De nupciis sollacio* (Gg. vi, 16, fol. 28b–31b)—begins:

Worschypull soffereyns, here we assemlyde [be] affore God, hys awngells and all hys seynts, by vertu off the blyssyd sacrament off matrimonye off too persawnes to make one, that is to been off one concente and off one wyll, the qwych e oned [unity] betwyx man and woman to be had was expressed by the sentence off God in hys ffyrst formation . . . : there shall be, seythe allmyghty God, ii dyfferent and diuerse persawnes in bodeye and in sawle the qwych e shall be made one fflesche and blode thorw the blyssyd sacrament off matrimonye. Thys seyde most blyssyd sacrament of matrimonye allmyghty God Hymselff institute and ordenyd in the blyssed and joyffull place off paradise affore anye syn . . . and so was ncow [the beginning?] off all the todyr vi [that is, sacraments]; and so it was ordeynyd in remedye anense [against] syn and to the conffyrmatyion and nobyll encesce off morall vertues to be possessyd in manys sawle in hys pilgrimage goynge honorablye to the ryall cyte off Jerusalem clepyd [called] heven.

Our preacher speaks of the woman as being for “the relief, succor, and help” of her man, while he is “to exercise the inward beams of his love upon her, and there set his heart above all other creatures next to almighty God.” He recalls the formation of Eve from Adam’s rib. He borrows from the theology of the day (as exemplated below) in recounting its symbolism:

almighty God formed woman not of the highest part of man, that is to say of the head, not of the lowest part, that is of the foot, but of a rib of the side not far from man’s heart in token that woman should not usurp to have domination nor preeminence above man, nor man should not set woman in his conceit in vile subjugation or evil dignity of worship and reverence beneath him; but woman to be equal and fellow unto man as a true companion and mate in their steadfast love.

He quotes and elaborates upon the divine command to increase and multiply:

fill the earth with your fruit, says almighty God, man to be lord and prince, woman to be lady and princess of fishes and fowls and of all

¹⁵ The transcription of the full texts of both sermons may be found in my doctoral dissertation mentioned above (note 1). In the present article I have, after the initial quotations, altered script, grammar, and spelling in accord with modern usage.

things that are endowed with life sensitive that are moved upon earth; and I will [says God] that you and your fruit that comes of natural course and propagation be inheritors of the bliss of heaven and to attain to that joy by perfect love and humble condition of meekness, there to restore what was lost by the angels.

“Wherefore, you sovereigns,” the homily concludes,

at this time being disposed in mind and will to receive this blessed sacrament, be one by means of perfect love, ground and beginner of all virtues. [Establish yourselves] so steadfastly in love that neither word nor language, countenance nor deed make you to withdraw the beams of perfect love as long as you live together, for love is the beginning and ground of this blessed sacrament of matrimony.

Here the preacher, mindful that the nuptial mass is of the Trinity, recalls that great mystery with direct reference to spousal love:

As the Father of heaven is so perfect that the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are iii persons and one God, so that in these iii persons resteth unity and oneness in all their works, likewise you sovereigns at this time by means of this blessed sacrament be ye perfect as long as ye shall naturally live together. As you shall be one in body, flesh, and in blood, likewise be steadfast and perfect with unity in love in your souls without discontinuance.

The second homily—*In solemnizatione matrimonii* (Gg. vi, 16, fol. 32a–33b)—begins:

Most worschippull ffrendys, we be cum hedyr at this time in the name of the Fader, Son & Holy Gost in the honerabyll presens of our moder gostly, holy Chyrche, to conjoynyn, knytt, and combyne thyse ii persawnes by the holy sacrament of matrimonye. . . . Qwyche sacrament off matrimonye is off this vertu and strengthe that thise ii persawnes qwyche be nowe too bodyes and ii sawles, durynge theyr lyvys togeder schall be butt one fflesche and too sawles.

As the preceding homilist, this one too suggests why the mass is of the Trinity:

This [that is, intimacy between husband and wife] is well figured in Genesis 1 when almighty God had formed our own fore father and mother in *agro damasceno* [the damascene country, that is, paradise] to the resemblance, similitude, and image of the blessed Trinity by his word alone.

The scriptural text “Increase and multiply” is quoted in Latin and translated, though not with the elaboration of the previous homily: “Increase, multiply, and fill the earth, be you sovereigns and lords over all the fishes of the sea, fowls, and birds of the air, and all that bears life upon earth.” The command given, “both Adam and Eve consented to this matrimony when Adam said: This bone of this woman is of my bones, and this flesh of this woman is of my flesh. So there were ii souls and one flesh.” This was how it was in the beginning, and “so it is the effect now of the sacrament of matrimony in all holy Church.”

The preacher enumerates three ways in which this knitting of man and woman is to be under “the bond and yoke of God.” The first is “under the bond of honor and worship in working, the second under the bond of true love and fidelity in living, and the third under the bond of obedience and continual abiding.” By the first bond, husband and wife are to do nothing against the sacrament or in any way displeasing to God. By the second, they are “with all their hearts effectually to love each other within by inward affection and without by good accord, delighting in peace and quiet.” Here the rubric about the placing of the wedding ring is brought forward and explicated:

And for this cause is the ring put and set by the husband upon the iiii finger of the woman, for to show that a true love and precordial affection must be between them. Wherefore, as doctors say, there is a vein coming from the heart of a woman to the iiiith finger; and therefore the ring is put on the same finger, that she should keep unity and love with him, and he with her.

The third and last bond demands that they “should support, help, and comfort one another in sickness and in health as long as they live together.”

As preachers generally, as we shall presently see, our minister now lists four reasons why this sacrament must be held in particular veneration: (1) God himself is its maker; (2) it was made in paradise; (3) it was the first sacrament that God ordained; and (4) the Church has made it to be one of the seven sacraments. “It is for these reasons that the *pallium* is held over their heads at the mass time, for the *pallium* represents the dignity of matrimony.” Thus the Church admonishes and ordains that bride and groom be reconciled to cleanness of life before receiving so great a sacrament “unto the increasing and augmenting of grace.” To this purpose all present are exhorted to offer their prayer.

Marriage as a “Religious Order”

The various nuptial rites that we have observed, with at least some of their accompanying preaching, evidence that the medieval Church, at least in England, held and preached marriage, precisely as a love bond between spouses, to be not simply a refuge from sin or a state second best to virginity, but good and holy in itself and productive of holiness in those who use it rightly.¹⁶ In this the liturgy echoed, or was echoed by, some of the best and influential of the contemporary theology and preaching on marriage within England itself and elsewhere on the continent. In his *Histoire de l'Occident* (c. 1225) Jacques de Vitry appears to have inaugurated the theme that marriage is an order similar to, and in some respects surpassing in dignity, the traditional religious orders of the Church.¹⁷ De Vitry himself seemed bent on popularizing the idea, for he used it in a sermon on the marriage feast of Cana in which he declared that while the various religious orders were founded by men, God established the order of marriage.¹⁸ Reasons for the surpassing dignity of marriage quickly multiplied, as evidenced in these enthusiastic words of a thirteenth-century Dominican preacher:

The order of marriage . . . is an order whose statutes are not of yesterday; it has existed as long as humankind. Our order [that of Dominicans] and that of the Friars Minor have been recently established; just as all other religious orders, they are of the era which begins with the Incarnation. But the order of marriage is as old as the world. I will say more: our order is the work of a simple mortal, a Spaniard, as that of the Friars Minor is the work of a Lombard; but it is God who himself instituted the order of marriage from the beginning of time. I shall say still more: at the moment of the deluge, the Lord saved by preference those who were married. Finally, the Queen of Paradise, the Blessed Virgin, was married, and God did not will to be born of her womb until she was.¹⁹

¹⁶ L. Gautier in his *La chevalerie* (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1884), 358 ff. gives a full, moment by moment description of a twelfth-century French marriage in which the grandeur and joy of the Church's ceremonies and its esteem for this particular sacrament are manifest. As his exemplum of medieval marriage rites, Gautier used that which appears in the pontifical of the monastery Lyrensis, twelfth century, as given in Martène, *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus*, ordo iii.

¹⁷ Cited by G. Le Bras in his treatise on the history of marriage, in *Dictionnaire de théologie Catholique*, vol. 9 (2) (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ane, 1932), col. 2180.

¹⁸ Sermones in epistolas et evangelia dominicalia (Anvers: 1575), as in Le Bras, *Dictionnaire de théologie Catholique*, ibid.

¹⁹ Quoted in A. Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire Française au moyen age, spécialement au XIIIe siècle*, 2nd ed. (Paris: H. Laurens, 1886), 429.

With sustained enthusiasm for his subject, our preacher goes on to offer marriage, not virginity, as the model and ideal for God's people, outlining in detail its properties and duties.

The same theme was further propagated by another thirteenth-century Dominican, William Peraldus, in both his *De eruditione principum* (often attributed to St. Thomas) and his widely circulated moral manual, the *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum*. In the latter work, indirectly influential in England through the fourteenth-century English translations of its French derivative, the *Somme le Roi*, the reasons for the superlative worth of marriage have increased to twelve. Besides those mentioned above, they are: it was instituted in Paradise; it was instituted in the state of innocence whereas the other orders are *post peccatum*; it was the only order that was saved in the Flood; it is the order in which the Blessed Virgin was a member; God, his Mother, and his disciples graced it with their presence at the marriage feast of Cana; God worked a great miracle at Cana to demonstrate the power of marriage, for there God changed "vile water" into "precious wine," thus showing how "the sexual act [*opus carnale*] without marriage is something vile but within marriage is precious"; the Church blesses the newlyweds during Mass while they are near the altar in the presence of the Body of Our Lord; marriage produces children who become the adopted children of God, and it is the source of virgins; it is one of the seven sacraments; its great power is multiple: It changes what otherwise would be mortal sin into venial sin or no sin at all, it prevents such evils as sterility or abortion, which often result from sex practiced outside of marriage, it establishes peace by uniting families, and it defends man there (in his sexual appetite) where the devil's attacks seem most formidable.²⁰

This is high praise for marriage, and for marriage in its totality including the conjugal act, which is likened to the "precious wine" made by God at Cana. No contemporary of Peraldus reading this passage from his *Summae* or hearing the likes of it preached from the pulpit (or at a wedding, as instanced in *De solemnizatione matrimonii* just quoted) would have felt that marriage was at all suspect in the eyes of the Church or being offered as a poor substitute for some nobler Christian calling. The whole drift of the passage is toward establishing the superiority of marriage above the other orders; and if some special esteem is reserved for the state of virginity, Peraldus offers the reminder that it is the married who are the source of virgins.

²⁰ *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum* (Antverpiae: 1588), lib. I, par. 3, tract. 3, c. xv. Among the English derivatives of Peraldus's moral manual (presumably in and through its French translation, *Somme le Roi*): *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, *Handlyng Sin, Avenbite of Inwyrt*—all of the thirteenth and early fourteenth century.

The woman herself, in and for herself, seems to have profited through such exaltation of marriage. So A. Lecoy de la Marche in his history of the French medieval pulpit says: “the preachers render honor to the woman in gladly exalting the dignity of marriage, in presenting it not only as a sacrament, but a religious order, having its distinctive rule and its particular genre of holiness.”²¹ But this reflected glory becomes all her own as the preachers praise her in her own right. Thus a theologian and preacher of such prominence as Robert de Sorbon (1201–1274), who also preached marriage as a religious order, homilized:

note that God made woman of more beautiful material than man, because he formed woman from the bones of Adam, but Adam from the slime of the earth. Likewise, he made woman in a nobler and more beautiful place than man, because he made man upon earth, but woman in Paradise. And perhaps it is because God has given such honor to women that they honor God more than do men. The man, therefore, must love and honor his wife greatly.²²

The Soul of Marriage: Spousal Love

Also consonant with the best of the theology of the time, marriage appears in the liturgy as holy precisely as *sacramentum*: The indissoluble union itself between husband and wife as reflective of the union of Christ with the Church. When, speaking specifically of Christian marriage, St. Thomas asks the question whether *sacramentum* is principal of the three marriage goods, his answer is that though in the order of finality, progeny and fidelity are of prime importance (they are what marriage “intends”), the *sacramentum* is more noble (*dignius*) than either of the other two and, with respect to marriage as such (*secundum se*), it is more essential (*essentialius*). The first of the marriage goods, offspring, he says, “belongs to marriage insofar as man is animal, the second [fidelity or mutual service] insofar as man is human, and the third [the sacramental union of husband and wife] insofar as he is Christian.”²³ Such was the teaching of St. Thomas and, thus, of Dominicans generally in England as elsewhere in the fourteenth

²¹ Marche, *La chaire Francaise*, 429.

²² As in M. Hauréau, *Notices et extraits de quelques MSS. Lat. de la Bibl. Nat.*, vol. 1 (Paris: 1901 ff.), 188–202. In this same sermon Sorbon speaks of a married burgher who thought someone stupid for having greeted him: “Hail, monk!”—not realizing that that person was thinking of the “order of matrimony.” Sorbon then proceeds to advise the married to learn the rules of their order “as novices do in some [other] order.”

²³ *Summa theologiae*, suppl., q. 49, a. 3; suppl., q. 65, a. 1.

and fifteenth centuries. The Franciscans in the person of Duns Scotus of Oxford in the same period were of like mind:

Marriage by reason of its perpetual bond is the sacrament [symbol] signifying Christ's indissoluble union with the Church. Therefore, the sacrament, as a good of marriage, is intrinsic to marriage itself, and its first formal perfection. But what is the proper formal perfection of each thing has the greater primacy within it (*principalius in ipso*). Therefore the sacrament is chief among the goods of marriage.²⁴

Reflecting back upon the liturgies we have considered, we see the harmonization with the theology here voiced. So throughout the entire nuptial ceremony inclusive of the homily, it is the union, love union, between the spouses that is emphasized, almost to the exclusion of all else. As we have seen, the ceremony begins with such words as: "Lo, brethren, we come here before God and his angels . . . to couple and knit these two bodies together . . . that they might be from this time forth but one body and two souls" or with some statement of the "law of marriage," which (as expressed by the Hereford ritual) is that husband and wife "be two in one flesh, subject to each other, and inseparable." It is the marrying couple who are center stage throughout the entire ceremony, standing or kneeling side by side, close to the altar and apart from all others. In the marriage promises there is the vow "to love and worship" each other till death. In the giving and receiving of the ring, the gold and the silver, there is the reminder that this is a ceremony betokening a love that is rooted in the heart, an "interior love" that must remain always new (*recens*), a love that must be one and perfect (*unitatem et perfectionem amoris*). The Church prays that the woman be loving (*amabilis*) toward her man, and that God join them both "in a society of true love." Just before communion the man, after receiving the kiss of peace from the priest, kisses his bride "alone" and she him "alone." In the evening, after all the festivities are over, the bridal bed is blessed with the newlyweds apparently within or upon it. Of the traditional ends or purposes of marriage, the liturgy mentions procreation only in passing. What is dwelt upon and accentuated is the intimate union in flesh as well as spirit of the "young ones" there present and their projected mutual fidelity until death.

This is a salient point overlooked by critics of the medieval theology on marriage who, consequently, view that theology as justifying marriage only in its procreative intention. Certainly there is heavy stress placed by

²⁴ As in the Franciscan seventeenth-century redaction of Scotus's teaching, *Summa theologica*, tom V, p. III, q. XLIX, a. iii.

St. Thomas, as by others of the best of medieval theologians, on the *bonum prolis*, and it ever remains for him the chief (though not the only) *end* of marriage. But such stress does not preclude his further and heavier emphasis upon the bond itself between the spouses. Husband and wife are, first and fundamentally, for one another, though in and through their union, they must also be for their children and society at large.²⁵ As expressed in the first homily quoted above, the husband must love his wife (as she him) “above every other creature,” including, supposedly, their children.

It should be noted that the liturgy’s many declarations of the holiness of the union between husband and wife do not dehumanize marriage nor do they enfeeble it by any negative qualifications relative to the conjugal act. Once again, the liturgy is one with the best of the theology of the day, this time on the principle of nature being presupposed and perfected, not destroyed, by grace.²⁶ The very first question asked in tracts on marriage in both the Thomistic and Franciscan schools of theology was: “Is marriage natural?” The answer, of course, is a resounding *yes*.²⁷ Only after securing the naturalness of marriage do the theologians consider its supernatural dimension, leaving intact its native properties. So in the liturgy, the love that is to be between the spouses is spoken of as holy and chaste, but it is equally and repeatedly emphasized that bride and groom are to be “one in flesh,”

²⁵ Cf. Aquinas, *ST* II–II, q. 26, a. 11. Of all the love relationships under God that Thomas treats in this question *de ordine caritatis*—love between fellow-citizens, rulers and subjects, simple friends, children for parents, etc.—at the pinnacle stands conjugal love. One should love one’s parents, Thomas concedes, more than one’s spouse by “reverential love” (*maior reverentia*), but the more “intense love” must be for one’s spouse (*intensius diligitur uxor*). There is only one other relationship, not mentioned by Thomas here, that might possibly be conceived of as superior: the love of parent for child. Is it, or should it be, greater than one’s love for one’s spouse? But whatever the reason for Thomas’s silence on this point, his *explicit* teaching is clear enough. For him the greatest love of all (at least as regards “intensity”), under (and within) God, is, or should be, the mutual love of husband and wife.

²⁶ The principle of grace presupposing and perfecting nature is stated time and again by Aquinas, for example, *ST* I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1; I–II, q. 99, a. 2, ad 1; III, q. 71, a. 1, ad 1; I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2; II–II, q. 26, a. 9, obj. 2.

²⁷ Aquinas, *ST* suppl., q. 41, a. 1; Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologiae*, tom. IV, lib. III, p. II, inq. II, q. IV, mem. III, cap. I, art. I. Alexander of Hales’s *Summa theologiae* (Florence: Quaracchi, 1924–48) was, apparently, not the work of one person alone but of many Franciscan theologians such that, as Etienne Gilson comments, it represents “the spirit of the thirteenth-century Franciscan school of theology at the University of Paris” (Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* [London: 1955], 327).

it is prayed that they be “multiplied,” and at the end of all the marriage *bed* is blessed. True, there is no detailed consideration of the specifically sexual aspects of conjugal love. But this is as we would expect in a public ceremony of this kind, the various rites manifesting a delicacy and modesty and a respect for the privacy of love. Their statements on love are general and positive; the blessing of bridal chamber and bed simple, brief, tactful. There is not a rubric suggesting what ought not to be. Only the epistle of the Mass may seem to strike a negative note with its warning against fornication; but this imposes no limitation upon the love-making between husband and wife. They are to avoid sexual love with others (fornication) since they are to have such love only for one another. It is simply a veiled expression of the *vitatio fornicationis*—marriage as a refuge not from sex but from sexual sin—which St. Paul, and theologians after him, offered as a just motive for marriage. Even here, then, as in the rest of the service, the natural bond between husband and wife is respected and indelicacy avoided. It is as though the last two words of that final rubric after the blessing of the couple in the bridal chamber were meant to express the purpose of the whole of the Church’s nuptial liturgy: “These things done, let him bless them with holy water, and so depart and leave them *in peace*.”

Spousal Equality

In its theology as in its governance the medieval Church has also been found wanting with regard to gender equality, considering woman to be naturally inferior to man and thus, in marriage, to be subject to him. Some of the nuptial liturgy seems to support the accusation. The several rites demand that the wife be obedient to her husband, acknowledge his superiority: she is to be “*buxum in bed and at borde*,” and in one of the liturgies she is made to kneel before her husband while in another she must also kiss his foot—in feudal token, no doubt, of his lordship. But again as in much of the theology, this obedience is not to be in response to any show of the husband’s superiority and control but rather his love and concern: If she is to obey him, it is because he loves, cherishes, and cares for her. It is also qualified by the more persistent explicit insistence on spousal *equality*. As we have seen, bride and groom are together, side by side, throughout the nuptial ceremony, and if at one or two moments the bride expresses her submission to her spouse, it is she who, as in weddings today, receives the greater honor and attention from groom and priest and therefore, presumably, from congregation. Though she expresses her obedience to her husband-to-be, in one of the rites (Hereford) it is prayed that the obedience be mutual—husband and wife are to be “subject to one another,” and in another (Worcestershire) that “each prefer

the other to oneself” and that they be united in the marriage partnership (*consortium*) “with equal effect, like mind, and mutual charity.” Both marry because they freely choose to do so, which is evidenced by the stern admonitions and questions initially put to them as to the congregation at large. They must be free to marry and must choose each other in freedom, which, as love itself, suggests equality.

Further, in the first of the nuptial homilies quoted above, we find cited the “rib theme” of Genesis used by much of the theology of the time mainly for the enforcement of spousal equality, each spouse giving to as well as receiving from the other. One of the more beautiful expressions of the theme is found in St. Bonaventure. Glossing Genesis 2:21–24, Bonaventure comments that the one sex is taken from the other in order to show the strength and exclusiveness of the bond that must exist between them (*forti vinculo et singulari*). The “operation” is performed while Adam sleeps in symbol of the peace and joy (*quietatio*) the man is meant to experience in union (*coniunctio*) with the woman, and the woman is derived from the man’s “bone” in symbol of the strength and support (*fortitudinem et sustentationem*) she is meant to draw from him. Finally, the woman is taken from her husband’s *side* in proof of the equality that must be in their life together (*equalitas mutuae societatis*).²⁸ The *Summa* of Alexander of Hales, that grand summation of the early Franciscan school of theology, accentuates still more the spousal equality revealed in the creation of Eve, and gives as its authority the prestigious Hugh of St. Victor in his own words:

Woman is made from the side of man that it might be shown that she was created for togetherness in love [*mulier . . . consortium creabatur delectationis*] lest perhaps if she had been made from the head, it might seem that she was to dominate the man, or if from the feet, she was to be subject to him in servitude. Therefore, since what was prepared for man was neither a ruler [*domina*] nor a servant [*ancilla*] but a companion [*socia*], she was created neither from the head nor the feet, but from man’s side, that he might know that she who had been taken from him was to be placed beside him [*iuxta se ponendam*].²⁹

Such exegesis in addition to qualifying the obedience of wife toward husband is also in accord with both the liturgy and the *sacramentum* theology: It allows no considerations external to the couple themselves to distract from the intimacy of their spousal love. In this first moment of

²⁸ Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences* (Florence: Quaracchi, 1934–), bk. 2, dist. 18, a. 1, q. 1.

²⁹ Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologiae*, cap. II.

the formation of woman, the theologians, as the liturgy, envision only the mutual relationship of the man and woman. The woman is not viewed as having been produced for the sake of procreation or for society at large or even for the Kingdom of God. Rather she is seen as being for her man, as he for her. For the liturgy, for St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Alexander of Hales, Hugh of St. Victor, and the many theologians and preachers influenced by them, the prime social relationship, the very first and best love under God, is evidently that between husband and wife.

Conclusion

Such was the Church's teaching on love and marriage as it was ritualized in late medieval England and often preached to the faithful therein—the countless numbers of rich and poor, nobles and peasants, learned and unlearned, scholars, poets, butchers, bakers—who, like Chaucer's wife of Bath, had been married themselves “before the church door” or had attended, perhaps frequently, the weddings of others. There is formidable indication that the same practice and preaching obtained elsewhere in the Church of that time. Not all, certainly, personally enjoyed such an elaborate affair: many marriages took place quite simply in a private home, many were still clandestine, that is, without benefit of Church or clergy. But for any who wanted to know what their *Church* thought of this particular way of life, they had only to be present at one of her nuptial liturgies—as we have only to read them to appreciate the same. Granted that during those long centuries spanning the early and medieval Church many harsh words, in genuine belief, in sport, or in spite, were spoken about marriage, and by individuals and bodies of individuals of considerable authority and influence. But a far greater authority, as revealed in the nuptial celebrations of the time together with some of the best of theology and preaching by dedicated celibates, had nothing but praise for it, precisely in its dimension of spousal love. We should search out and listen for this also. N V

The “Dark Knowledge of God” and Our Worship of the Divine Mystery

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THE MAIN FOCUS of my *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*,¹ St. Thomas Aquinas’s theological epistemology of the divine names, may also be useful to the Catholic ecclesial community, as a way of accounting for what happens, theologically and epistemologically, when we adore and praise the Divine Mystery in our liturgical worship.² For Aquinas’s theological epistemology can be viewed as a kind of transcendental reflection upon the conditions of possibility for the language of Trinitarian monotheism that is proper to Christian worship. As systematic theology begins its life from within the matrix of the Church’s worship, so it should also place its insights at the service of the ecclesial body, which after all, as David Tracy has taught us, is one of theology’s three public arenas, along with society and academe.³ Indeed, Aquinas’s theological insights are of considerable importance not just for classrooms but for churches as well.

As would only seem fitting for this inaugural Charles Cardinal Journet Lecture, I would also like, in the investigation of my subject, to call at

¹ Gregory Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004). The following essay is a slightly revised version of the inaugural Charles Cardinal Journet Lecture, given at Ave Maria University on April 7, 2005. I sincerely thank the Aquinas Center for Theological Renewal at Ave Maria University for awarding the inaugural Charles Cardinal Journet Prize to my book, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*.

² What I say here in reference to Catholic liturgical worship would also apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to various other forms of Christian liturgical worship.

³ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 3–45.

times upon the very thought of that prolific theologian and loyal churchman after whom this lecture is named. Charles Journet was born on January 26, 1891, in Geneva, Switzerland, and was educated at the Seminary of Fribourg in the Swiss town of the same name. He was ordained a priest in 1915, and after spending seven years in pastoral work for the diocese of Fribourg, became a faculty member of the Seminary of Fribourg, a position he kept from 1924 to 1965. An internationally renowned theologian, he also founded the French theological journal *Nova et Vetera*. After receiving episcopal consecration for the titular see of Fornos Minore on February 20, 1965, he was created cardinal by Pope Paul VI in a consistory two days later and took part in the fourth and last session of Vatican Council II in the fall of that same year. He died on April 15, 1975, in Fribourg.

Cardinal Journet's bibliography is truly vast, impressively wide-ranging, and obviously derives from a contemplative and deep-thinking spirit.⁴ In the English-speaking world, some of the most popular translations of his works include *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, *The Meaning of Grace*, and *The Meaning of Evil*.⁵ However, the little work of his I want to use for my subject is less well-known and available, and goes by the felicitous English title *The Dark Knowledge of God*.⁶ "Dark knowledge" describes very well, according to Journet, the kind of recognition we have of God in this world, and the phrase also links up nicely with Thomas's theological epistemology as an appropriate theological foundation for understanding what we are thinking and saying whenever we worship the Divine Mystery.

In what follows, then, I will first describe how various components of the Catholic liturgy, especially its words, evoke a sense of God's mystery.

⁴ For the bibliography, consult *Charles Journet: Un théologien contemplatif* (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1991); this is also found in *Nova et Vetera* (French) 66 (October–December 1991). Also see *Charles Journet (1891–1975): Un théologien en son siècle: Actes du colloque de Genève, 1991*, comp. Philippe Chenaux and Guy Bedouelle et al. (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires; Paris: Éditions Mame, 1992).

⁵ *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, vol. 1 of *The Apostolic Hierarchy*, trans. A. H. C. Downes (London: Sheed & Ward, 1955); *The Meaning of Grace*, trans. A. V. Littledale (New York: P. J. Kenedy, 1960); *The Meaning of Evil*, trans. Michael Barry (New York: P. J. Kenedy, 1963).

⁶ *The Dark Knowledge of God*, trans. James Anderson (London: Sheed & Ward, 1948). The original French title, not as rhetorically pithy for my purposes, is *Connaissance et inconnaissance de Dieu* (Paris: Eglhoff, 1943). Journet also has two other articles dealing with the divine names: "La portée des noms divins," *Nova et Vetera* (French) 35 (1960): 150–54; "Les noms de Dieu ineffable," *Nova et Vetera* (French) 35 (1960): 291–309.

I will next discuss how we might characterize Christian worship language for God as the iconic mean between the extremes of agnostic and idolatrous speech. Finally, with a little help from Journet's book, I will discuss some elements from Aquinas's theology of the divine names, which provide some of the basic theological and epistemological presuppositions for understanding our liturgical worship of the Divine Mystery.

Liturgical Language and the Mystery of God

Let me depict a liturgical setting that all of us have probably experienced at some point in our lives, maybe even very recently.

We start outside in silent darkness, and then a fresh fire sparks into life, and from that fire a large candle and many small candles are lit. We process into the place of worship, and once everyone is inside, carrying their bright points of glittering light that radiate a gentle glow but also leave much in shadow, an ancient, tremulous, and ecstatic song begins, filling every ear with a lilting melody of praise and exultation. The sweet-sharp smell of a frankincense cloud wafts through the air, stimulating our olfactory nerves and, if it is strong enough, even our sense of taste. A bit later, we feel drops of water as they scatter from an aspergillum of metal or moss and strike our foreheads, noses, cheeks, and hands. Even later, we will taste sanctified bread and wine and, perhaps with just a slight flush of inebriation, know that we have communed with our Deity.

It is a high holy day, the congregants are many, and during the service we will also perceive the community's physicality as we see, hear, and touch one another. All our senses have engaged in worship and praise, every physical organ of cognition has become active and attentive to the presence of mystery, quickened and provoked by strange yet familiar, by alluring yet comforting sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations.

So, which liturgy have I been describing? The answer comes without pause if you have ever experienced it—of course, the Catholic Easter Vigil liturgy. Well . . . maybe . . . maybe not. Attend carefully to my description: Those details could just as easily apply to an ancient Mithraic worship service, a Bacchic revelry of the more demure sort, or a modern pagan or Wiccan celebration. As Catholics, you have spontaneously traced the distinctive contours of your faith over the liturgical Rorschach test I have just administered to you. My apologies for the surprise, but two crucial points come out of this exercise. First, the Catholic liturgy gains some of its power to evoke mystery from its rootedness in the physical and human worlds: At the level of symbol, physical environment, and

human community, Catholics are quite at home with the rites and structures of many religions, ancient and modern. But only *some* of its power, for the physical symbols I have been talking about, though *necessary* for Catholic liturgy's approach to the mystery, are nevertheless not *sufficient* for that task. An older sacramental theology used to speak of each sacrament as comprising both a matter and a form; today, we substitute the terminology of symbol and word, though we are talking about the same thing. Only symbol and word together are sufficient to evoke the Christian mystery, but while the symbols of our worship tie us to the totality of religious humanity across all ages and cultures, it is the words of our worship that make it distinctively Christian and Catholic.

My second point, then, says that it is the language of our worship, when connected to its symbols, that especially allows us to enter into and experience the mystery of our Trinitarian God. Indeed, what you were spontaneously supplying to my earlier description were all the words that accompany the symbols and actions of the Easter Vigil: The new fire resounds with cries of "Christ our light"; the ecstatic melody sings the "Exsultet," that Easter hymn of salvation history, sin, death, Christ's cross, and the victory of his resurrection; the water flicks out over the congregation while they are repeating their Christian baptismal promises and reliving that primordial sacrament; and the words Catholic worshipers hear while consuming the sacred bread and wine are "Body of Christ" and "Blood of Christ." These are Christian and Catholic words that transmute the religious symbols common to humanity into inseparable elements of Catholic worship.

So, then, what is the quality of the liturgical language proper to Christian worship, which attempts to proclaim the Trinity, which is Christianity's distinctive form of monotheism? Liturgical language is often scriptural language, and I cannot begin to display here the amplitude of scriptural and liturgical testimony about the mystery of God. Scripture and liturgy show God as powerful and transcendent creator, and as caring and tender provider and re-creator; as merciful and just; as punisher and forgiver; as lover, spouse, friend, and parent. Jesus is also a study in contrasts, as he heals, forgives, banters, and cajoles, duels words with his adversaries, and shows a tender side as well as a threatening mien. Jesus' words about God are also a blend of light and darkness, sunshine and shadow: God is deeply caring but morally demanding, fully forgiving but not averse to punishing, willing to overlook adultery but not hypocrisy, dispensing mercy to sinners and justice to the hard of heart, and always loving toward his Son, even on the cross. Journet writes that "Jesus made human words say what they had never said before concerning the mystery of the intimate life of God, the

strictness of his justice, the depth and gentleness of his forgiveness, the tenderness of his love."⁷ But even the Son could not reveal all about the Father, for only the Son fully knows the Father, and the Father the Son. The liturgy characteristic of Christian Trinitarian monotheism prays to God, Creator, and Father; to Son of God, Christ, and Lord; to Counselor, Comforter, and Spirit—but these names do not reveal all there is to know about the Trinity, for much is left in shadows.

How does the language of Catholic worship, allied to its vital symbols, introduce us into the mystery of God?⁸ We address, pray to, and speak of the triune God as the elusive transcendent One who escapes every one of our words, actions, thoughts, and imaginings, who will not be captured by anything created; the liturgy also acknowledges, however, that this transcendent God has not remained entirely hidden but has been powerfully active in creating and gracing the human race, in gradually revealing himself to humanity, and in remaining immanent within humans through the gifts of Christ and the Spirit. Christian liturgy rejoices to shower upon this God every possible pure perfection, confessing and praying that God is supremely good, loving, merciful, compassionate, caring, provident, eternal, powerful, wise, and so forth. The liturgy, as a kind of theophany of the triune God, presses us by its inner dynamism to simultaneously confess our God as transcendently other and as immanently intimate with creation.⁹ Since the transcendent God is never exhausted by the creative and graceful actions of the immanent God, the mysterious triune God continues to abide beyond our ken and comprehension.

The apex of the liturgical experience of God's mystery, which thrills and soothes at the same time, always includes the feeling that God is ever more, ever better, and ever beyond whatever we are singing or praying or confessing at the time. Thus, the mystery of God is what Karl Rahner refers to as God's essential incomprehensibility, which is not merely temporary and able to be removed by the beatific vision but will endure as long as God lives.¹⁰

⁷ Journet, *Dark Knowledge*, 120.

⁸ Cf. James Bacik, "Reclaiming a Sense of Mystery in Worship," *Emmanuel* 98 (1992): 251–55. A whole issue of *Liturgical Ministry* 8 [Summer 1999]: 113–55) is also dedicated to the theme "Recovery of Mystery in Liturgy."

⁹ Thomas Fitzgerald, "The Holy Eucharist as Theophany," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 28 (1983): 27–38; Stanislaus Campbell, "The Sense of Transcendence in Liturgy: What Is Appropriate for Engagement in Mystery?" *Liturgical Ministry* 8 (1999): 123–35.

¹⁰ Karl Rahner has written about the essential incomprehensibility of God as Holy Mystery, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4, *More Recent Writings*, trans. Kevin Smyth, (New York: Seabury, 1974), 36–73.

Christian liturgical language, therefore, when cultured within the nutritive environment of religious symbolism, encourages us to experience the mystery of God as the essential and eternal incomprehensibility of Father, Son, and Spirit, even as the Father is revealed and acknowledged in the temporal missions of Son and Spirit, and even while all Three are confessed and worshiped in the prayers, rituals, and sacraments of the church. 1 Timothy 6:16 (New Oxford Bible) is in effect a paradigmatic liturgical doxology celebrating God's mysterious transcendence and incomprehensibility: "It is [God] alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen."

Agnostic, Idolatrous, and Iconic Language

The worship language endemic to Christian Trinitarian monotheism is what I call iconic in nature and is a mean between agnostic speech and idolatrous speech. This claim is a mouthful and will bear a little unpacking. It is precisely because Christian monotheism believes in an active Creator and Redeemer God who is both transcendent and immanent that its worshipful speech cannot be either agnostic or idolatrous, but must be iconic. Some worshipful speech can veer almost totally toward a language of unsaying and unknowing,¹¹ but Christian worship language, as we have seen, is entirely too positive and too knowing (though not all-positive and all-knowing) for that kind of agnostic discourse. For most Christians, it is God's immanence (especially in Christ and the Holy Spirit) that prevents God's transcendence from remaining totally unknowable to the human and thus totally unsayable by the human, and this is why most Christian worshipful speech does not become entirely agnostic or even cease altogether in adoring silence.¹²

For Christians, moreover, it is also God's transcendence that keeps God's immanence from becoming identified with the human or any other creature, and this is ultimately why Christian worshipful speech can never be as clear and precise, or as thin and woodenly rationalistic, as a chiseled idol. For the words of Christian liturgy, however worldly and secular their provenance, are predicated of the God who transcends that world and can never exist as a mere object within it. Although launching itself from the pad of normal human discourse, liturgical speech always

¹¹ The phrase is from Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Sells explains why some mystical speech prefers the way of negation and agnosticism.

¹² By way of exception, Quaker silence holds a unique position within the spectrum of Christian liturgies.

strives to shoot beyond the earthly atmosphere of that discourse and vector itself into the outer spaces of divine infinity (" 'for my ways are not your ways,' says the Lord," Is 55:8–9). But idolatrous speech, like the idol itself, is content to follow the prearranged contours of material reality, precisely and minutely tracing the visage of its god according to a preunderstood human pattern of concepts and possibilities.

A word or two more on the difference between idol and icon is in order at this point. The two words are English transliterations of two Greek words (*eidōlon* and *eikōn*) that are as physically close to each other in a Greek dictionary (barely a page between them) as they are in an English one. Their original meanings are also very close: image, similitude, likeness, spectral phantom, and image or idea in the mind.¹³ However, due to monotheism's tradition of polemic against the pagan idols and to Eastern Christianity's penchant for veneration of icons,¹⁴ in religious contexts *icon* almost always has a positive meaning whereas *idol* has gained a pejorative significance that is hard to shake.¹⁵ Part of the negative meaning of *idol* in monotheistic religious contexts derives from the fact that pagan idols were often invested by their devotees with magical or fetishistic qualities, so that whoever controlled or possessed the idol also somehow controlled or possessed the depicted god or goddess. But

¹³ There is a slight difference in connotation: *eidōlon*, which derives from *eidōs* (form or shape), can also mean an unsubstantial form; *eikōn*, which derives from *eikō* (to look like or be like), can also mean a portrait. Thus, *eidōlon* as image connotes the outer form or shape of something, whereas *eikōn* as image connotes a portrait or likeness of something.

¹⁴ Monotheism's history of polemic against pagan idols begins with the Decalogue's prohibition of "graven images" in Exodus 20:4, which the Septuagint translated by *eidōla*. Because of the trenchant critique against paganism and its idolatrous practices by early Christian apologists, the iconoclasts were able to claim the mantle of tradition and thus gain an early upper hand in the eastern struggle over the veneration of images, but what eventually won the day for the iconodules at Nicaea II in 787 was a sustained Christological meditation on the aesthetic implications of the incarnation of God in the flesh and face of Jesus Christ. See Vladimir Lossky and Leonid Ouspensky, *The Meaning of Icons*, trans. William Palmer and E. Kadloubovsky (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1989); Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (New Haven: Yale University, 1990); Moshe Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea* (New York and London: New York University, 1992); Ambrosios Giakalis, *Images of the Divine: The Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (New York: Brill, 1994); Christoph von Schönborn, *God's Human Face: The Christ-Icon*, trans. Lothar Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994).

¹⁵ For example, Gregory Collins, "From Idols to Icons," *Doctrine and Life* 52 (2002): 334–38. In popular culture, on the other hand, *idol* often refers to someone who is admired and almost worshiped by his or her devotees.

true monotheism abhors any human control or capture of the one God, whether spiritually, cognitively, or linguistically. The other negative aspect of standard idol worship is the idol's minutely exact and precisely traced delineation of the god's form, which monotheism would see as derogating from that necessary nebulosity that should envelop any representation of the transcendent God, whether pictorially or linguistically.¹⁶

The term *icon* and its derivatives can mean different things to different people. What I have chosen to focus upon are the icon's following traits, which can occur in a variety of contexts: the religious icon can be described as a "door" or "window" to the divine;¹⁷ it can be understood as making eternal verities visible to the present world or as relating a created and tangible artifact to its uncreated and intangible prototype;¹⁸ and it can be seen as always leaving certain aspects of God undepicted, so that it does not simply substitute itself as an adequate representation for what it points to.¹⁹ This is why I have chosen to refer to the Christian language of worship as iconic, for on the basis of God's immanence it tries in some modest way to represent and suggest God's transcendence, but without ever identifying its thoughts and representations with the transcendent God and thus attempting to capture that God imaginatively or cognitively.

¹⁶ In C. S. Lewis's novel, *Till We Have Faces* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1956), 272, an old peasant woman prefers praying to the ancient formless (or perhaps deformed) stone image of the goddess Ungit rather than to her more lifelike and more sunnily beautiful Hellenistic wooden image. Though both are idols in Lewis's story, the more rationalistic Hellenistic version is usually what we have in mind when we think of pagan idols.

¹⁷ Cf. Marilyn Minto, *Windows into Heaven: An Introduction to the Russian Icon* (Cardiff: Aureus, 1996); Linette Martin, *Sacred Doorways: A Beginner's Guide to Icons* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2002).

¹⁸ Cf. Stephen Beall, "Verbal Iconicity: A Problem in Liturgical Translation," *Downside Review* 117 (1999): 133–44. Anthony Welch notes that in Islam, a highly aniconic form of monotheism, calligraphy, the craft of the beautifully written word, was thought to be the supreme art; he remarks on the "iconic relationship between the written words of a visible Quran, created by human skill, and the prototype, the intangible, eternal, and uncreated Quran." "Epigraphs as Icons: The Role of the Written Word in Islamic Art," in *Image and the Word: Confrontations in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Joseph Gutmann (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977), 72.

¹⁹ Discussing Jean-Luc Marion's view of Aquinas's understanding of *esse*, which remains indeterminate at its highest reaches, John Martis describes Aquinas's notion of being as an icon rather than an idol of God, for it does not substitute itself for what it points to. "Thomistic *Esse*—Idol or Icon? Jean-Luc Marion's God without Being," *Pacifica* 9 (1996): 55–68.

The Dark Knowledge of God

In this section, I would like to make three points about Aquinas's theological epistemology of the divine names. Though these points cannot attempt to offer a comprehensive synthesis of that epistemology, they do show, together with some cognate insights from Journet's book, that Aquinas does propose a genuine "dark knowledge" of God and, thus, that his theory about how we know and speak of God is both a theological justification and an epistemological foundation for what I have called the "iconic" quality of the Christian liturgy's language of worship. His full theory, erudite and complicated as it is, performs a crucial service for the life of the Church in its worship and prayer.

First Point. Thomas's theory of the divine names, in two major ways, is thoroughly imbued with the darkness of negation and limitation. First, he is entirely convinced that God is essentially incomprehensible and expresses that conviction by two theses: (1) that no created intellect can naturally possess a definitional or intuitive knowledge of God's essence; and (2) that no created intellect can ever possess, in principle, a comprehensive knowledge of God's essence. Thomas frequently says that during our earthly life we can know *that* God exists but cannot possess a definitional, exact knowledge of *what* God is.²⁰ However, he is willing to grant that the blessed, through God's grace, enjoy an intuitional and essential knowledge of God in the beatific vision of heaven.²¹ But even the blessed, for all time, will never have a comprehensive, infinite knowledge of God in heaven, even though they will possess an intuitive and direct knowledge of the infinite divine essence. A rhetorically effective text frames the issue succinctly: "The very boundlessness [*immensitas*] of God will be seen [in heaven] but it will not be seen boundlessly [*immense*]: for [God's] total measure [*totus modus*] will be seen but not totally [*totaliter*]."²²

²⁰ Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, ed. P. Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 1.8.1.1; *Summa contra gentiles*, in *Liber de veritate catholicae fidei contra errores infidelium*, vols. 2–3 (Turin, 1961), I, 11.66, 69. For more texts and background, see Rocca, *Speaking*, 30–32, and 30–32 footnotes 10–17; Journet, *Dark Knowledge*, 115–17.

²¹ For texts, see Rocca, *Speaking*, 32–40; cf. Journet, *Dark Knowledge*, 117–18.

²² *De veritate*, in Leonine Commission, vol. 22 (1970–76), 8.2. ad 6. For more texts, see Rocca, *Speaking*, 40–47. For the originality that Thomas shows in how he handles these issues, see *Speaking*, 39 note 38; and for the paradox that Thomas asserts when he claims that the blessed have a direct though finite knowledge of the infinite God, see *ibid.*, 47 note 60. See also Karl Rahner, "An Investigation of the Incomprehensibility of God in St. Thomas Aquinas," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 16, *Experience of the Spirit: Source of Theology*, trans. D. Morland (New York: Seabury, 1979), 244–54.

Several texts display that, for Thomas, our intellects can do little to penetrate the darkness of God in this life: In the end, “we recognize God as one unknown,”²³ for what God is “remains totally unknown,”²⁴ and indeed the ultimate in human knowledge of God occurs when someone “knows that he knows not God, insofar as he recognizes that what God is exceeds everything that we understand of Him.”²⁵

Second, Aquinas also possesses a tripartite *via negativa* or “negative path.” The first part of his *via negativa* is what I have called, in *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, the “qualitative negation,” which is a total and absolute denial of a quality or predicate to God, removing from God the entire universe of discourse connected with the predicate in question. We deny these qualities of God because they do not agree with the perfection of the divine being. For example, we say that God is immaterial (because he is not part of the material realm); eternal (because he is not part of the temporal sphere); immutable (because he is not a reality that changes); simple (because he is not a complex reality made of parts); and infinite (because he is not a finite reality).

The second part of Aquinas’s *via negativa* is what I have called, in *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, the “objective modal negation,” which denies the creaturely objective mode of a perfection to God, although the perfection itself as such, according to the divine mode of supereminence, is still able to be affirmed of God. For example, knowledge may be predicated of God, but also denied of God by an objective modal negation:

Whenever knowledge or understanding or anything pertaining to perfection is removed from God, this must be understood according to transcendence [*excessus*] and not according to defect. . . . If it is denied, then, that the name *understanding* is properly suitable to God, this is because God does not understand according to the creature’s mode but more eminently.²⁶

²³ “Deum tamquam ignotum cognoscimus.” *Super Boetium de Trinitate*, in Leonine Commission, vol. 50 (1992), 1.2. ad 1.

²⁴ “Penitus manet ignotum.” *ScG III*, 49.2270. For the Neoplatonic background of the phrase, see Rocca, *Speaking*, 28 note 3.

²⁵ *De potentia*, in *Quaestiones disputatae*, ed. P.M. Pession (Turin, 1949), 7.5. ad 14. For more on God as supereminent darkness, see Rocca, *Speaking*, 28–29; Journet, *Dark Knowledge*, 29–30. The most beautiful pages in Journet’s book (70–114) deal with the global negations of apophatic mysticism, which originate in the theological virtue of love and involve a non-conceptual type of knowledge based on connatural inclination.

²⁶ *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, 1.35.1.1 ad 1.

What happens if we just keep performing qualitative negations and objective modal negations, one after the other? Thomas gives a beautiful answer that is also mystically uplifting:

When we proceed into God through the way of negation [*remotio*], first we deny of Him all corporeal realities; and next, even intellectual realities as they are found in creatures, like goodness and wisdom, and then there remains in our understanding only that God exists and nothing further, so that it suffers a kind of confusion. Lastly, however, we even remove from Him his very existence, as it is in creatures, and then our understanding remains in a certain darkness of ignorance according to which, in this present state of life, we are best united to God, as Dionysius says, and this is a sort of thick fog [*caligo*] in which God is said to dwell.²⁷

The third part of Aquinas’s *via negativa* is what I have called, in *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, the “subjective modal negation,” which denies of God the usual ways we tend to think of and express the divine attributes, due to the manner in which we inevitably understand and signify by means of propositions. Consider the following quote:

Every name fails to signify the divine act of being on account of the fact that no name simultaneously signifies something perfect and simple, for abstract names do not signify a being subsisting in itself, and concrete names signify a composite being; . . . rejecting whatever is imperfect, we use each kind of name in divine predication: abstract names on account of their simplicity and concrete names on account of their perfection.²⁸

Summing up, then, qualitative negations are absolute denials while modal negations are relative denials; objective modal negations remove the finite mode of the creature from God while subjective modal negations refuse to assert of God those imperfections that arise from our human manner of understanding and signifying. It should be clear by now that Aquinas’s stress on God’s incomprehensibility and his *via negativa* cause his theological epistemology to embrace a very *dark* knowledge of God. The second point, however, shows that his theology of the divine names also advocates a dark *knowledge* of God.

²⁷ Ibid., 1.8.1.1 ad 4.

²⁸ Ibid., 1.4.1.2. For more on these aspects of Thomas’s *via negativa*, see Rocca, *Speaking*, 56–68; chapter 11 is dedicated entirely to an investigation of the subjective modal negation, which Thomas often explains by saying that certain affirmative and absolute names are truly predicated of God as regards the reality they signify (*res significata*) but not as regards their manner of signifying it (*modus significandi*).

Second Point. Granting the legitimate negations and limitations described in the first point, Thomas's theory of the divine names also espouses a positive, analogous, and substantial predication of God's divine names. To begin with, Aquinas always argues that true theological predication cannot possibly be a matter of univocity or equivocity and, by a process of elimination, concludes that the only alternative left is that of analogy. Univocity cannot be the answer, for if it were, then certain truths about God's transcendence that Thomas has previously established to his own satisfaction could not possibly be the case; but since they are the case, then the attributes we predicate of God cannot be univocal to creatures and God. The truths about God's transcendence that are incompatible with univocity are divine incomprehensibility, divine simplicity and perfection, divine omnipotence, the identity of being and essence in God, and the fact that God never participates in any perfection but simply is that perfection.²⁹ Basically, since univocity always depreciates the divine transcendence, Aquinas sees it as a kind of philosophical or theological idolatry.³⁰

Next, Aquinas uses both epistemological and ontological reasons to argue against equivocity. The epistemological reason asserts that if the predication of the divine names involved equivocity, then our knowledge of God would be destroyed, since the equivocal name carries totally disparate meanings for God and creatures; the ontological reason affirms that the order and likeness between creatures and God precludes any equivocal predication of the divine names. A text from the *De veritate* puts it all together:

It cannot be asserted that whatever is said of God and creatures is predicated in a purely equivocal fashion, because unless there were some correspondence [*convenientia*] between the creature and God in reality, God's essence would not be the likeness [*similitudo*] of creatures, and so by knowing his own essence he would not know creatures; similarly, we

²⁹ *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, 1.35.1.4; *Compendium theologiae*, in Leonine Commission, vol. 42 (1979), 1.26–7; *De veritate*, 2.11.103–18; ScG I, 32.285, 288–9; *De potentia*, 7.7; *Summa theologiae*, in Leonine Commission, vols. 4–12 (1888–1906) I, q. 13, a. 5.

³⁰ David Burrell speaks of philosophers and philosophy possessing an “inertial tendency” toward the “default position” of univocal language concerning God. “Analogy, Creation, and Theological Language,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 74 (2000): 40, 48. Denys Turner writes: “For Thomas, reason so participates in the divine self-knowledge that it can, by the exercise of its distinctively natural capacity of reasoning, . . . attain to a conclusion the meaning of which lies beyond any which could stand in a relation of univocity with the created order” (*Faith, Reason, and the Existence of God* [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004], 51).

could not attain the knowledge of God from created realities, nor from among the names applied to creatures could we assert one name of God more than another; for in equivocal predication it does not matter which name is used, since no correspondence to reality is recognized anyway.³¹

Finally, Aquinas concludes that analogy is the only remaining possibility, for analogy

is a mean between pure equivocity and simple univocity, for in those names which are said analogically there is neither one meaning as in univocal names, nor totally diverse meanings as in equivocal names, but the name which is analogically predicated in plural ways signifies different relations to something one.³²

Analogy turns out to be the only epistemological explanation capable of accounting for the fact that, in Thomas's eyes, we really *do know* some truths *about God*. For equivocity cannot account for the fact that some *true knowledge* of God actually exists, and, by detracting from God's transcendence, univocity does not allow our true theological judgments to recognize God *as God*. Aquinas's doctrine of theological analogy arises out of his epistemological reflections upon what he sees as the necessary presuppositions and consequences of true theological judgments.

For Thomas, then, analogy is more a matter of judgment than of concept. Analogy occurs when the meanings of words contained in statements are spontaneously adjusted and nuanced in order to keep the truth-value of the statements in which those words appear. But the paradox is that while analogical theological judgments about God may be true, it is not clear at all how the concepts that are the predicates in those judgments apply to God. In other words, the truth of theological judgments outstrips the intrinsic intelligibility of their concepts in relation to God. This means that there is truth of judgment along with darkness of concept, and that,

³¹ *De veritate*, 2.11.122–34; cf. *Compendium theologiae*, 1.27; *De potentia*, 7.7; *ST I*, q. 13, a. 5.

³² *ST I*, q. 13, a. 5; cf. *ScG I*, 34.297; Aquinas, *De potentia*, 7.7; *Compendium theologiae*, 1.27; *De veritate*, 2.11.137–9. For the International Theological Commission, analogy is also the mean between excessively positivist and excessively negativist views of theological knowledge and language: "Analogy protects against an objectivist, reified, and, ultimately, mysteryless understanding of faith and dogma. But it protects as well against an overly negative theology, which regards dogmas as mere ciphers of an ultimately inconceivable Transcendence and consequently fails to recognize the historical concreteness of the Christian mystery of salvation." See "On the Interpretation of Dogmas," *Origins* 20 (May 17, 1990): 9.

although we may make true judgments about God's very being, the nature of that being remains dark to our intuitive understanding.³³

Aquinas propounds a theology of the divine names that claims that affirmative and absolute names like *wise* and *good* signify the truth about God's essence in an analogous and positive fashion. Although, as we have seen, he accepts God's negative *names* like *immaterial* or *incorporeal*, he disagrees with those who merely offer a minimalist negative or causal *interpretation* of God's affirmative names, who understand "God is good," for example, either to mean only that God is not evil (the negative interpretation), or only that God is the cause of good (the causal interpretation).³⁴ Since for Aquinas "whatever perfection is in creatures exists in God preeminently,"³⁵ when "it is said that 'God is good,' the meaning is not 'God is the cause of goodness' or 'God is not evil,' but 'that which we call goodness in creatures preexists in God according to a higher mode.'"³⁶

Maimonides is usually Thomas's opponent when he contests the negative interpretation of the divine names,³⁷ and, in contrast to him, Thomas

³³ For more on analogy as judgment in Aquinas, see Rocca, *Speaking*, 173–87.

³⁴ The main texts are *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, 1.2.1.3; *De potentia*, 7.5; *ST I*, q. 13, a. 2. For more texts and detail on Aquinas's positive theology, including the arguments for his interpretation of the divine names, see Rocca, *Speaking*, 298–313.

³⁵ *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, 1.2.1.3. Journet also relates God's unknowability to the divine preeminence: "God is named as unnameable, known as unknown, in this sense: that infinite wisdom and infinite existence, far from fading into nothingness in crossing the threshold of the divine mystery, are, on the contrary, preserved there intact, like the seven colors in white light, being raised to a degree of incandescence that remains unknowable and inexpressible" (*Dark Knowledge*, 37).

³⁶ *ST I*, q. 13, a. 2. Gerard Hughes states that for Aquinas, "God is wise" means "that God is whatever it takes to ground the fact that he is the explanation of all human wisdom." See "Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism," in *The Philosophical Assessment of Theology* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 1987), 52.

³⁷ For Maimonides's position on the predication of the divine names, see *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. S. Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963) 1.50–60. According to *Guide*, 1.58, terms that are perfections for us (for example, *living*) are necessarily predicated of God in affirmative propositions with predicates that are positive in form ("God is living"), but logically these propositions *mean* the negation of the opposite ("God is not mortal"). *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, 1.2.1.3, is Thomas's most detailed treatment of Maimonides's position. For comparisons of Maimonides and Aquinas, see Alexander Broadie, "Maimonides and Aquinas on the Names of God," *Religious Studies* 23 (1987): 157–70; Avital Wohlmann, *Thomas d'Aquin et Maïmonide: Un dialogue exemplaire* (Paris: Cerf, 1988); Neil Stubbens, "Naming God: Moses Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas," *Thomist* 54 (1990): 229–67; David Burrell, "Maimonides, Aquinas, and Ghazali on Naming God," in *The Return to Scripture in Judaism and Christianity: Essays in*

holds that affirmative and absolute names are predicated of God substantially (*substantialiter*)³⁸ and essentially (*essentialiter*).³⁹ The divine names "signify the divine substance, though deficiently and imperfectly . . . and not . . . as comprehending it."⁴⁰ With great care and precision, he writes that the divine names signify "that which the divine substance is [*id quod est divina substantia*] but do not perfectly signify it according to what it is [*secundum quod est*] but according to how it is understood by us [*secundum quod a nobis intelligitur*]."⁴¹

The care with which he expresses his thought demonstrates his concern to uphold a positive theology which predicates divine names of the divine substance [*id quod est*] while at the same time rejecting any intuitive knowledge of the divine substance [*secundum quod est*]. . . . He is claiming in his positive theology a truth about God's substance and, at the same time, denying any insight *into* God's substance. Most paradoxically, he is at once claiming a knowledge *about* God and admitting an ignorance of God.⁴²

Postcritical Scriptural Interpretation, ed. Peter Ochs (New York: Paulist, 1993), 238–46; Stephen Lahey, "Maimonides and Analogy," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 67 (1993): 219–32; Idit Dobbs-Weinstein, *Maimonides and St. Thomas on the Limits of Reason* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995).

³⁸ *ST I*, q. 13, a. 2.

³⁹ *ST I*, q. 13, a. 6.

⁴⁰ *De potentia*, 7.5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; *ST I*, q. 13, a. 2, replaces the *secundum quod est* with the equivalent *secundum suam substantiam*.

⁴² Rocca, *Speaking*, 305. This is a crucial but difficult distinction. The rest of this note is quoted from *Speaking*, 305 note 28: "Consider the subtle differences in the positions of two of Aquinas's most famous twentieth-century commentators, Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson. Maritain, interpreting Aquinas's statement that certain names signify 'that which the divine substance is,' writes that such names "do indeed tell in some manner what God is,' and that we can 'know what God is in a more-or-less imperfect, but always true, fashion' (*The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. under the supervision of G. B. Phelan from 4th French ed. [New York: Scribner, 1959], 425). But Gilson contends that Aquinas is only assuring us that such names designate the divine substance 'as actually being what the names signify,' which can occur without any positive concept of the divine substance (*The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. K. Shook [New York: Random, 1956], 458 note 47). "To escape the "agnosticism of quidditative concept" to which some are ill-resigned where God is concerned, it is not necessary to seek refuge in a more or less imperfect concept of the divine essence, but in the positive character of affirmative judgments,' which still leave God's essence totally unable to be conceptualized (*ibid.*, note 51). Gerard Hughes, referring to perfection terms in Aquinas's doctrine of God, writes similarly: 'We know something about the truth-conditions for the application of such terms to God; for we

Third Point. Thomas's theological epistemology of the divine names is a rich and balanced blend of positive and negative theology, and all the elements that comprise that blend must be acknowledged according to their proper weight if any theological assertion is to be considered true. He advances a tensioned truth about God, in which only the fruitful interplay of positive and negative theology can ever do justice to the elusive God who escapes our epistemic and linguistic capture, and yet who at the same time, as the gracious and free God, desires to be acknowledged and worshiped as our Creator and Redeemer.⁴³ Looming over everything "is the mysterious incomprehensibility of God, from whom Aquinas's qualitative negative theology removes whole realms of discourse, and whose essence humans cannot intuit in this life or ever fathom comprehensively, even in the life to come."⁴⁴ But under that looming cloud of unknowing, Aquinas does manage to claim a positive and analogous predication of the divine names that bespeak God's very substance. Nevertheless, even these positive divine names must deal with the critique of qualitative negative theology, must submit themselves to the denials of both types of modal negative theology, and must allow themselves to be integrated into Thomas's threefold dialectic of affirmation, negation, and transcendent reaffirmation through divine supereminence—a dialectic that ultimately stems from Thomas's reading of Pseudo-Dionysius's *Divine Names*.⁴⁵ *De potentia*, 7.5, ad 2, shows us how

know that those truth-conditions obtain. But we do not know what those truth-conditions consist in. In other words, we know something *about* the meanings of these terms used analogically of God, since we know that they are related to the meanings of the same words used of ourselves: but we do not know what they mean when used of him' ('Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism,' 51)."

⁴³ Cf. Rocca, *Speaking*, 356. Journet claims that Aquinas's theological epistemology is "primarily and essentially affirmative, cataphatic, and, secondarily, negative, apophatic" (*Dark Knowledge*, 71). Denys Turner points out Aquinas's "fundamental confidence in theological speech, a trust that our ordinary ways of talking about God are fundamentally *in order*, needing only to be subordinated to a governing apophaticism, expressed as an epistemological principle." See "Apophaticism, Idolatry, and the Claims of Reason," in *Silence and the Word: Negative Theology and Incarnation*, ed. Oliver Davies and Denys Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002), 32. Turner also speaks of "a complex interplay, or dialectic, of affirmative and negative tensions" (*Faith, Reason, and the Existence of God*, 51).

⁴⁴ Rocca, *Speaking*, 355.

⁴⁵ I discuss whether Pseudo-Dionysius proposes a twofold or threefold dialectic in *Speaking*, 22–25. Fran O'Rourke thinks that Aquinas sees a threefold pattern in Pseudo-Dionysius's basically twofold dialectic. See *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 14–18, 33–35.

this last process works: Wisdom is predicated of God positively, but then it is also immediately denied of God, not because there is a deficiency of wisdom in God but because God possesses wisdom supereminently, in a manner that transcends all our concepts and words. "And so through that triple way of speaking according to which God is said to be wise, Dionysius offers a complete understanding of how such names are to be attributed to God."⁴⁶

Conclusion

I have found that the first paragraph of my book's conclusion also works very well as a conclusion to this lecture, and so I quote liberally from it here:

Thomas weaves his negative and positive theology together, precisely because *only that interweaving* can do justice to the fact that the Church must speak and praise, must invoke and love and follow the God *who just is* the Mysterious and Incomprehensible One who ever escapes and is never caught by our ideational and conceptual schemes. Thomas's blend of positive and negative theology, however academic its form of expression and social location, is ultimately the servant of the Church in its worship of the utterly mysterious God and, thus, Thomas the academic also serves Thomas the spiritual guide. . . . The Church cannot *really worship* God unless it is somehow able to know that God and somehow able to speak to and about that God, while at the same time the Church cannot worship the *real God* unless it worships the incomprehensible God. Thomas's interplay of positive and negative theology, therefore, enables the Church's language about God and its worship of God to be truthfully iconic without becoming blasphemously idolatrous.⁴⁷

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⁴⁶ Cf. Journet, *Dark Knowledge*, 72. For more on Thomas's use of the threefold path, see Rocca, *Speaking*, 49–55.

⁴⁷ Rocca, *Speaking*, 353.

The Baptismal Catechumenate as Model for Catechesis

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THE 1998 *General Directory for Catechesis* speaks of the baptismal catechumenate as the model for all catechesis.¹ What does this mean? How would it shape the way we catechize in the third millennium of our life as Church? In order to appreciate the richness of what the *General Directory for Catechesis* is calling for here, we must first have a clear understanding of what the baptismal catechumenate is. The first part of this essay will thus flesh out what the *Directory* is referring to when it speaks of the baptismal catechumenate. The second part will then pull together the various sections of the *General Directory for Catechesis* which enable us to consider what catechesis would be like if it were modeled on the catechumenate.

Background for Understanding the Baptismal Catechumenate

Restoration of the Catechumenate by the Second Vatican Council

The baptismal catechumenate in the Church today is a result of the decrees of the Second Vatican Council. In the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum concilium*, number 64, the council fathers called for the restoration of the catechumenate for unbaptized adults, and later, in the *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, Ad gentes*, they added this description of it:

Those who, through the Church, have accepted from God a belief in Christ should be admitted to the catechumenate by liturgical rites. The

¹ Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1998), 59, 90.

catechumenate is not a mere expounding of doctrines and precepts, but a training period for the whole Christian life. It is an apprenticeship of appropriate length, during which disciples are joined to Christ their Teacher. Therefore, catechumens should be properly instructed in the mystery of salvation and in the practice of gospel morality. By sacred rites which are to be held at successive intervals, they should be introduced into the life of faith, liturgy, and love, which God's People lives.

Then, when the sacraments of Christian initiation have freed them from the power of darkness (cf. Col 1:13), having died with Christ, been buried with him, and risen with him (cf. Rom 6:4–11; Col 2:12–13; 1 Pt 3:21–22; Mk 16:16), they receive the Spirit (cf. 1 Thes 3:5–7; Acts 8:14–17) who makes them adopted sons, and celebrate the remembrance of the Lord's death and resurrection together with the whole People of God.

It is the desire of this council that the liturgy of the Lenten and Easter seasons be restored in such a way as to dispose the hearts of the catechumens to celebrate the paschal mystery at whose solemn ceremonies they are reborn to Christ through baptism.

But this Christian initiation through the catechumenate should be taken care of not only by catechists and priests, but by the entire community of the faithful, especially by the sponsors. Thus, right from the outset the catechumens will feel that they belong to the People of God. Since the life of the Church is an apostolic one, the catechumens should also learn to cooperate actively, by the witness of their lives and by the profession of their faith, in the spread of the gospel and in the upbuilding of the Church.²

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (1972) provided the liturgical rites necessary to fulfill the council's decree that the catechumenate be restored. In order to have a clear picture of how the RCIA catechumenate is intended to function, it is necessary to consider it in light of the catechumenate of the early centuries of the Church which inspired it.³

² *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (Ad gentes)*, no. 14, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbot, S.J. (New York: Guild Press, 1966).

³ The *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 129, cites Vatican Council II's *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum*, no. 8, concerning the witness of the early Church Fathers to how the riches of the tradition are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, adding that special attention in this regard should be given to "the decisive importance which the Fathers attribute to the baptismal catechumenate in the structure of the particular churches," and "the gradual and progressive conception of Christian formation, arranged in stages;" for further discussion of the witness of the Fathers, see *Directory*, no. 129. *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 89, provides further description of patristic catechesis and its stages, noting, "This patristic concept continues to illuminate the present catechumenate and initiatory catechesis itself."

What exactly *was* this way of preparing converts for Baptism in the early Church that the council wanted to restore? *How* did this catechumenate actually help people convert?

What the Council Was Seeking to Restore

Initiatory practice in the first few centuries was based on the belief that, as Tertullian put it, “Christians are *made*, not born.” The dominant culture was hostile to Christianity, and Christian worship itself was a crime punishable by death. When people raised in that culture were attracted by the truth of the gospel and wanted to join the Christian community, they had to make a radical break with the culture that formed them. Their understanding of the meaning and purpose of life had to change, and the very way they lived their daily lives had to change. Converts needed to learn both what Christ’s teachings were, and how to put them into practice by consistently changing their behavior; they needed to learn to receive guidance and strength—and express gratitude—in prayer. Conversion to Christ and membership in his Body, the Church, thus required an entirely new way of thinking and living; and growing into this new life took time.

In order to prepare converts to surrender their lives to Christ in Baptism, and to live faithful lives as part of the community of his followers by the power of his Spirit given in Baptism, the early Church developed the catechumenate. Those admitted to the catechumenate, known as catechumens, were being “made” into Christians: They were in training to become members of the baptized faithful.

All the members of the Church community shared in the responsibility for the making of Christians. It was ordinary believers who brought prospective converts for formal instruction (perhaps after having informally evangelized them), who provided testimony that potential members were capable of receiving catechesis and, later, concerning whether their manner of life manifested readiness for Baptism.⁴ Initiation into the Church was thus initiation into a whole fabric of relationships with baptized Christians whose faith was incarnated in their lives.

During their time in the catechumenate, catechumens received instruction in a communal and liturgical setting. Here, in the context of prayer and worship, they heard the proclamation of Scripture and preaching that flowed from that proclamation. This preaching proclaimed the mystery of who God had revealed himself to be through his actions in human history, and sought to bring the catechumens into that mystery.

⁴ See, for example, *Apostolic Tradition*, 15–20.

Since initiatory catechesis took place in the context of worship and was, thus, part of a worship celebration, it was not at all like presenting information in a classroom with people taking notes. The catechist did explain who God is and how to live in faithful relationship with him, by carefully laying out the narrative of salvation history. But at the same time as the catechist told the story of how God had acted to save, simultaneously he sought to draw the catechumens into that story, so that they would become the latest chapters in the story of how God calls and redeems a People. Catechesis was, thus, a vehicle through which the Holy Spirit could touch the hearts of listeners and convert them, draw them into relationship with God in Christ.

In fourth-century Jerusalem, for example, every morning during Lent, catechumens in the final stages of preparation for Baptism came for catechesis. But it was only *after* they had prayed, been exorcized, and heard the proclamation of the Word related to the topic of the catechesis, that they were actually given instruction. Then the bishop of Jerusalem himself, Cyril, delivered the catechesis. After a few introductory sessions, he simply took the articles of the Creed and explained each in turn by using texts from Scripture.

But Cyril's *Catecheses* are not dry lectures of abstract theology. As he himself explains, "We have come together now not to make speculative exposition of the Scriptures, but rather to"—the Greek word he uses here means literally—"make faith."⁵ As Cyril lays out the narrative of how all through human history God has acted to bring salvation, he encourages his listeners to identify with those God has saved in the Scripture. As the catechumens identify with those who have gone before them in salvation history, they themselves become part of salvation history.

There is no dichotomy here between conversion of heart and conversion of mind. Converts are being drawn to a deeper knowledge of God and a deeper love of God simultaneously, so they will be able to surrender their lives to him at Baptism. After all, "knowledge of God" without love of God is not really knowledge. But—at the same time—it is not possible to love God without knowledge of who he is, what he is like. Catechetical formation in the early Church thus included cognitive, moral, spiritual, and affective dimensions.

This simultaneous conversion of heart and mind was mediated through communal worship, not instilled in private one-on-one sessions for instruction. With so many members of the community involved in

⁵ Cyril, *Catechesis*, 13.9; see further P. Jackson, "Cyril of Jerusalem's Use of Scripture in Catechesis," *Theological Studies* 52 (1991): 431–50.

the preparation of converts for Baptism, it was understood that conversion is not private but ecclesial, and, since the place where the Church most fully realizes and expresses her identity is in worship, the context for conversion is liturgical.

Through this kind of catechesis at liturgical rites fostering conversion in the context of community, catechumens were prepared to die and rise with Christ and receive his Spirit at Baptism. It was this kind of initiatory practice that formed the many martyrs and saints of the early Church, and helped Christianity to grow from the faith of a handful of Palestinian Jews to the official religion of the Roman Empire by the end of the fourth century. And it was this tradition of catechetical formation precipitating genuine conversion in communal context that the council fathers of Vatican II had in mind when they called for the restoration of the catechumenate for adults and its rites.

*How the Catechumenate Was Restored in the
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*

In order to grasp how the restored catechumenate is intended to “work” in the contemporary Church, three aspects of the RCIA must be kept in mind:

1. how the catechumenate fits into the ritual structure of the RCIA;
2. the dimensions of conversion the RCIA intends to be brought to maturity in the catechumenate; and
3. the liturgical context for conversion and the role of the Word as catalyst for conversion in the RCIA.

Ritual Structure

First, it is necessary to understand the place of the catechumenate in the RCIA’s ritual structure. The council had called for the initiatory process to be made up of several distinct steps and to be sanctified by sacred rites celebrated at successive intervals of time. The RCIA, therefore, comprises four stages, with specific liturgical celebrations marking important moments in these stages. In the first stage, Evangelization and the Precatechumenate, people come to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and desire to be his disciples.⁶

⁶ *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, in *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, vol. IA, *Initiation* (New York: Pueblo, 1988), numbers 36–40. The paragraph numbers for the RCIA given in this essay are as found in this edition of the RCIA, which was approved for the United States in 1988. These differ from the numbers for the RCIA given in the *General Directory for Catechesis*, which correspond to the numbers in *Ordo initiationis Christianiae adultorum* (*Editio Typica*, 1972).

When they have sufficient familiarity with Christ's teaching and want to give their lives to him as part of his Church, they are ready for the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (RCIA, nos. 41–74), where they are formally signed with the Cross and may be given a book of the gospels.

The second stage, the Catechumenate (RCIA, nos. 75–117), is “a lengthy period of formation of catechumens’ minds and hearts” (RCIA, no. 118) and “the context of integral catechesis” (*General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 88). During this stage there are celebrations of the Word of God for the catechumens’ benefit (RCIA, nos. 75; 81–85), gradual and complete catechesis (no. 75), minor exorcisms (nos. 90–94), and blessings (nos. 95–97). When the catechumens’ faith has reached sufficient maturity for them to be able to live faithful Christian lives in the Catholic Church, they are formally chosen to be baptized at the Rite of Election; this is normally celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent in preparation for Easter Baptism (nos. 118–37).

The third stage, the time of Purification and Enlightenment (RCIA, nos. 138–84), is a more intense spiritual preparation for the sacraments of initiation. During this stage, the catechumens, now known as the Elect, experience the rites of the Scrutinies and Presentations. At each of the three Scrutinies (normally celebrated in the Masses of the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent), the Elect are exorcized and receive special solemn intercessory prayers from the assembly before they are dismissed (nos. 141–56, 164–77). At the Presentation of the Creed, the Creed is formally delivered to the Elect (nos. 157–63); the Lord’s Prayer is entrusted to them at the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer (nos. 178–84). After final preparatory rites on Holy Saturday (nos. 185–204), the Elect receive Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist during the Easter Vigil (nos. 206–43).

In the final stage, Mystagogy (RCIA, nos. 244–51), the “distinctive spirit and power of postbaptismal catechesis . . . derive from the new personal experience of the sacraments and of the community,” so the main setting is “the so-called Masses for neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season” (no. 247). The RCIA, then, is composed of a sequence of liturgical rites marking successive stages of formation, through which God can give adults the graces of conversion they need for Baptism.

Dimensions of Conversion

The second aspect of the RCIA that must be borne in mind is the nature of the conversion it seeks to foster during the catechumenate. In the four subsections of number 75, the RCIA summarizes the four ways that the catechumens receive pastoral formation and training in the Christian life,

so that “the dispositions manifested at their acceptance into the catechumenate are brought to maturity.”

The first way the catechumens’ initial conversion is brought to maturity is through “gradual and complete” catechesis. This catechesis provides the necessary knowledge of doctrine, in the framework of the liturgical year, “solidly supported by celebrations of the Word,” and in a way that leads the converts to a “profound sense of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate” (no. 75:1).

The second area of the catechumens’ pastoral formation is their assimilation into living the Christian life through their relationships with members of the Christian community. The catechumens learn to pray, to hope in Christ above all, to “follow supernatural inspiration in their deeds, and to practice love of neighbor, even at the cost of self-renunciation,” as they are drawn into the community’s common life. With the help especially of sponsors and godparents, they learn to change their thinking and behavior as they “pass from the old to a new nature made perfect in Christ” (no. 75:2).

The third way in which the catechumens receive “training in the Christian life” is in liturgical prayer. Catholics must be able to relate to God through the formal prayer texts of the liturgical books and through liturgical symbols and rites, and the catechumens’ participation in public worship helps them learn to do this. Both through the proclamation of the Word and through the community’s public intercession for them, the catechumens are drawn into a sacramental way of life, even though they are normally dismissed from the liturgical assembly before the liturgy of the Eucharist begins. They thus learn the “language” of worship by speaking it.

The fourth dimension of the Christian life inculcated during the catechumenate is sharing in the Church’s apostolic mission. The catechumens learn to work with members of the faithful in bearing witness to their faith, both by evangelizing and in works of mercy.

This, then, is the nature of the conversion and transformation of personality which the RCIA seeks to foster. But how is it that this conversion actually comes about as the converts pass through the stages of the RCIA and participate in the rites marking those stages?

*The Liturgical Context for Conversion
and the Proclamation of the Word in the Rites*

The final aspect of the RCIA that must be kept in mind to truly understand how the catechumenate “works,” is the Rite’s appreciation of the liturgy as privileged *locus* for conversion and the crucial role of the proclamation of the Word. The reason that the RCIA is centered around

liturgical rites is precisely that its purpose is conversion—people surrendering their lives to God so that he can transform them—and the place where we are most vulnerable to God is when we are at worship. When we come before God and worship him, we are most fully who we were created to be, so we are most open to being touched by God so that he can convert us and draw us to himself.

Conversion means coming into a whole new way of life. But in order to learn to *act* differently, we need to learn to *think* differently, and that means we need to learn to *perceive* differently. This kind of change can only happen when God touches people with his grace, and we are most open to his transforming grace when we are worshipping. Through the liturgical rites of the RCIA, then, God acts to bring about conversion, both through the ritual actions (such as the signing of the senses with the Cross) and prayers, and also through the proclamation of his Word. Since those preparing for Baptism cannot yet receive the Lord in the Eucharist, he meets them at the “table” of his Word, which functions as catalyst for conversion. The proper readings for each rite were carefully chosen to mediate conversion, to help bring it about through the powerful images and stories they proclaim (for example, the call of Abram). In each rite the readings work together with the ritual actions as a vehicle for conversion.⁷ In addition to the catechumens’ participation in these rites and in the liturgy of the Word at Sunday Mass, the RCIA also calls for “special celebrations of the Word” for the catechumens (nos. 81–89; cf. 79). RCIA, number 84, speaks of celebrations of the Word being held in connection with sessions for catechesis “so that these will occur in a context of prayer.”

In the RCIA, then, the grace of God works through the rites of worship marking four stages of initiation to transform people and assimilate them into the Church community by their coming to share the community’s beliefs, their way of living and acting, and their life of prayer and worship. The “lengthy period of formation” of converts’ minds and hearts where their initial conversion is brought to sufficient maturity that they are ready to receive Baptism, is the catechumenate—and it is this baptismal catechumenate, as it has been restored in the life of the Church today, that the *General Directory for Catechesis* now proposes as model for *all* catechesis.

⁷ Further reflection on how the proper Scripture readings for the RCIA both describe and mediate conversion may be found in P. Jackson, *Journeybread for the Shadowlands: the Readings for the Rites of the Catechumenate*, RCIA (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993).

The Catechumenate as Model for Catechesis in the *General Directory for Catechesis*

In number 90, the *General Directory for Catechesis* affirms: “given that the *missio ad gentes* is the paradigm of all the Church’s missionary activity, the baptismal catechumenate, which is joined to it, is the model of all its catechizing activity.” The *Directory* goes on to give some elements of the catechumenate that should inspire contemporary catechesis, while bearing in mind the fundamental difference between catechesis given to prepare people for Baptism, and catechesis for Catholics who are baptized as infants. The *Directory* explains that the baptismal catechumenate provides a source of inspiration for postbaptismal catechesis in several ways: by reminding the Church of the importance of Christian initiation (from initial catechesis through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) and pastoral care for it; by demonstrating how catechesis involves a comprehensive process of formation; by witnessing to the centrality of the Paschal Mystery in all the Church’s liturgy and spirituality, which must inform all catechesis; by providing experience with inculturation; and by calling for all the members of the community of the faithful to take responsibility for handing on the Church’s faith.

The remainder of this essay will consider what it would mean for catechesis to be modeled on the catechumenate, by summarizing what the *General Directory for Catechesis* has to say about five key aspects that characterize the baptismal catechumenate and that could be applied to catechesis at all levels: (1) that it comprises formation; (2) that it mediates conversion; (3) specific dimensions of that conversion; (4) that it has a liturgical context; and (5) that it involves the whole Church community.

Catechesis as Comprising Formation

First, the *Directory* states:

the concept of the baptismal catechumenate as *a process of formation and as a true school of the faith* offers post-baptismal catechesis dynamic and particular characteristics: comprehensiveness and integrity of formation; its gradual character, expressed in various stages; its connection with meaningful rites, symbols, biblical and liturgical signs; its constant references to the Christian community.⁸

⁸ *General Directory for Catechesis*, 91, original emphasis. While the *General Directory for Catechesis* states that the gradual character of the catechumenate, “expressed in stages,” can provide a model for all catechesis, it does not spell out specific ways in which postbaptismal catechesis of those baptized as infants could be divided into particular stages. Since this might vary according to local pastoral factors (for

Because initiatory catechesis is thus formation for the whole Christian life, it “comprises but surpasses mere instruction.”⁹ According to the *General Directory for Catechesis*, all catechesis should therefore learn from patristic catechesis how “to form the personality of the believer and be a true and proper school of Christian pedagogy.”¹⁰ This means that catechists themselves must be formed so that they “are able to transmit not only a teaching but also an integral Christian formation,” so that they are simultaneously “teachers, educators, and witnesses of the faith” (no. 237).

Catechesis as Directed Toward Conversion

What would be involved in understanding catechesis in this way? The *Directory* points out that since those who are being catechized today are part of a world “in which religious sense is obscured,” catechesis “must have a catechumenal style, as of integral formation rather than mere information: it must act in reality as a means of arousing true conversion” (no. 29). Catechesis as *formation*, then, means catechesis *directed toward conversion*, because it is only by starting with conversion, “and therefore by making allowance for the interior disposition of ‘whoever believes,’” that catechesis can “fulfill its proper task of education in the faith” (no. 62). It is God who sows experiential faith in human hearts, and the responsibility of catechists is to nourish this gift and help it to grow. Catechists are called to facilitate maturation of the faith given by the Holy Spirit to those they are catechizing.¹¹

But conversion to faith in God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, and growing in that faith, go beyond growing in intellectual certitude. The *Directory* explains that “faith involves a change of life, a *‘metanoia’* that is a profound transformation of mind and heart; it causes the believer to live that conversion” (no. 55). This conversion takes place at all levels of Christians’ existence: our life of prayer and acceptance of God’s will, our participating in the mission of the Church,

example, age for Confirmation), it would probably become clear in the course of pastoral adaptation and inculturation.

⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 68; cf., nos. 29, 67. Further, “Genuine catechesis therefore is that catechesis which helps to perceive the action of God throughout the formative journey. It encourages a climate of listening, of thanksgiving, and of prayer” (no. 145). *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 73, provides a clear distinction between religious instruction and catechesis.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 33. According to *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 64, initiatory catechesis is “basic and fundamental for building up the personality of the individual disciple, as it is for the whole Christian community.”

¹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 244. Further, catechists are actually “prepared or formed so as to facilitate a growth in the experience of faith,” which God himself planted in peoples’ hearts.

our family life, our professional life, our social and economic responsibilities (no. 55). One of the goals of catechesis should thus be to move people to abandon themselves “‘completely and freely to God’: intelligence, will, heart, and memory” (no. 144). Both basic education in the faith and ongoing education are to serve the process of continuing conversion (no. 69).

To speak in this way about people abandoning themselves to God and learning to do this in ever-deeper ways is, of course, to speak of the mystery of dying and rising with Christ that is at the heart of our lives as Christians. The *Directory* sees initiatory catechesis as drawing converts into this:

The baptismal catechumenate is also completely permeated by the *mystery of Christ's Passover*. For this reason, “all initiation must clearly reveal its paschal nature.” The Easter Vigil, focal point of the Christian liturgy, and its spirituality of Baptism, inspire all catechesis. (no. 91, original emphasis)

If a spirituality that flows from being plunged into the Paschal Mystery at the Easter Vigil is to inspire *all* catechesis, then all catechesis must make disciples who love the Lord Jesus and seek to follow him through the Cross to the Father. In fact, when the *Directory* speaks of conversion, one of the images it uses most often to show what it means by conversion is the image of being a follower of Jesus, a disciple.¹² “Catechesis takes the form of a process or journey of following the Christ of the gospel in the Spirit towards the Father” (no. 143). “It is the task of catechesis to show who Jesus Christ is, his life and ministry, and to present the Christian faith as the following of his person”; it must therefore be based on the gospels (no. 41). “The Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ, full and sincere adherence to his person and the decision to walk in his footsteps” (no. 53).

The *Directory* states that the goal that should permeate all aspects of the formation of those who catechize is

to lead the catechist to know how to animate a catechetical journey of which the necessary stages are: the proclamation of Jesus Christ; making known his life by setting it in the context of salvation history; explanation of the mystery of the Son of God, made man for us; and finally to help the catechumen, or those being catechized, to identify with Jesus

¹² For example, *ibid.*, nos. 69, 85. The *General Directory for Catechesis* also speaks of encountering Christ (no. 53) or meeting him (no. 55); the “good soil” of the parable of the sower is “men and women who are open to a personal relationship with God” (no. 15).

Christ through the sacraments of initiation.¹³ *With continuing catechesis, the catechist merely tries to deepen these basic elements.* (no. 235, emphasis added)

In seeking to help people identify with Christ, catechists are seeking to enable them to enter into union with him. “In reality, the fundamental task of catechesis is to present Christ and everything in relation to him. This explicitly promotes the following of Jesus and communion with him.”¹⁴ Again,

conversion to Jesus Christ implies walking in his footsteps. Catechesis must, therefore, transmit to the disciples the attitudes of the Master himself. The disciples thus undertake a journey of interior transformation, in which, by participating in the paschal mystery of the Lord, “they pass from the old man to the new man who has been made perfect in Christ.”¹⁵

Yet while the *Directory* so often describes catechesis as seeking to draw people into personal following of—relationship with—the Risen Lord, it is explicit that this is *not* a private, individualistic relationship that can be lived out without reference to the Church that is his Body on earth:

Faith is a personal encounter with Christ, making of oneself a disciple of him. This demands a permanent commitment to think like him, to judge like him and to live as he lived. *In this way the believer unites himself to the community of disciples and appropriates the faith of the Church.*¹⁶

Catechesis and the Dimensions of Conversion

The *General Directory for Catechesis* is clear, then, that the baptismal catechumenate can help us understand all catechesis (including postbaptismal

¹³ At this point in the text, the *General Directory for Catechesis* contains the footnote: “The four stages of the baptismal catechumenate are cultivated in a christocentric prospective.” Cf. *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 41: “the mystery of Christ, in the revealed message, is not another element alongside others, it is rather the center from which all other elements are structured and illuminated.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 98; cf. no. 235: “The christocentric purpose of catechesis, which emphasizes the communion of the convert with Jesus Christ, permeates all aspects of the formation of catechists.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 85; cf. no. 67, which describes catechesis as providing “comprehensive formation” which “promotes an authentic following of Christ focused on his Person.”

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 53, emphasis added. Catechesis as formation nurtures the roots of the Christian’s faith life and “enables him to receive more solid nourishment in the ordinary life of the Christian community.” *Ibid.*, no. 67.

catechesis) as formation, which should inspire genuine conversion to Christ as Lord, a conversion understood as following him to the Father. But *how* does the *Directory* describe the dimensions of this conversion fostered by the catechumenate that it envisions as model for *all* catechesis?

The *Directory* states that since the catechumenate is “an apprenticeship in the *whole* Christian life,”¹⁷ it must initiate people into the “*fullness* of the Christian life” (no. 63), incorporate them “into the community which lives, celebrates, and bears witness to the faith,” adding, “this inherent richness in the catechumenate of nonbaptized adults should serve to inspire other forms of catechesis” (no. 68). Basing itself on the way Jesus himself formed his disciples, the *Directory* concludes, “the duties of catechesis correspond to education of the different dimensions of faith. . . . In virtue of its own internal dynamic, the faith demands to be known, celebrated, lived, and translated into prayer,” in the context of being lived out in the Christian community and proclaimed in mission.¹⁸ In other words, when the *Directory* calls for all catechesis to learn from the baptismal catechumenate to provide formation that is comprehensive (for example, nos. 90, 91), it is calling for catechesis that fosters the same dimensions of conversion found in RCIA number 75 which were summarized in the first part of this essay.

First, *knowing* the faith: “Knowledge of the faith (*fides quae*) is required by adherence to the faith (*fides qua*)”; the more we love someone, the more we want to know them.¹⁹ Here the *Directory* calls attention to the need for catechesis in both Revelation and Tradition, and to the interrelationship of Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium (no. 30). “Catechesis transmits the content of the Word of God according to the two modalities whereby the Church possesses it, interiorizes it, and lives it: As a narration of the history of salvation and as an explicitation of the Creed” (no. 128). Drawing on the wealth of the patristic tradition, and the later tradition of catechisms, the *Directory* names seven basic elements that characterize catechesis: the three phases of the narrative of salvation history (Old Testament, life of Christ, history of the Church), and the four pillars of its exposition (Creed, sacraments, Decalogue, Our Father), naming these as seven foundation stones both for initiatory and for continuing catechesis (no. 130). The *Directory* thus presents Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the*

¹⁷ Emphasis added. The term “apprenticeship” derives from *Ad gentes*, no. 14; cf. *General Directory for Catechesis*, nos. 86a, 67.

¹⁸ *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 84, cf. no. 144: One of the objects inspiring the methodological choices of catechesis is “to develop all the dimensions of faith through which it conveys faith which is known, celebrated, lived and prayed.”

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 85, cf. no. 92.

Catholic Church as the two basic sources for contemporary catechesis (no. 128). This catechesis must be capable of initiating *all* Catholic Christians into a “‘theological reading of modern problems’”: an ability to perceive all reality as marked simultaneously by God’s creative goodness, the power of human sin, and the dynamism of the Resurrection (no. 16).

Second, *living* the Christian life in the community of the faithful. The *Directory* affirms:

The Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus takes up the Decalogue and impresses upon it the spirit of the beatitudes, is an indispensable point of reference for the moral formation which is most necessary today. (no. 85)

Living a faithful Christian life in the Christian community requires careful training, and the *Directory* names specific attitudes taught by Christ himself that catechesis today must inculcate: the spirit of simplicity and humility (Mt 18:3), solicitude for the least among the brethren (Mt 18:6), particular care for those who are alienated (Mt 18:12), fraternal correction (Mt 18:15), common prayer (Mt 18:19), and mutual forgiveness (Mt 18:22), all of which can be embraced by the new commandment “Love one another as I have loved you” (no. 86a). These attitudes are not only to be *explained* by catechesis: “the Christian community is in herself living catechesis. Thus she proclaims, celebrates, works, and remains always a vital, indispensable, and primary *locus* of catechesis” (no. 141). The *Directory* insists that the members of the community live the gospel morality they proclaim and that their moral testimony “must always demonstrate the social consequences of the demands of the gospel” (no. 85).

What about the third dimension of conversion, formation in the community’s life of prayer and worship? The *Directory* tells us:

Communion with Jesus Christ leads the disciples to assume the attitude of prayer and contemplation which the Master himself had. To learn to pray with Jesus is to pray with the same sentiments with which he turned to the Father: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication, and awe for his glory. (no. 85)

Praying the Our Father, the prayer Jesus taught his disciples that is the model of all Christian prayer, allows Christians to enter into all those dimensions of his relationship with the Father. The *Directory* thus speaks of the rite known as the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer (RCIA, nos. 178–84) as “a summary of the entire gospel” and “therefore a true act of catechesis” (no. 85).

The *Directory* refers to liturgical catechesis as an “eminent kind of catechesis,”²⁰ which

prepares for the sacraments by promoting a deeper understanding and experience of the liturgy. This explains the contents of the prayers, the meaning of the signs and gestures, educates to active participation, contemplation, and silence. (no. 71)

The *Directory* expresses concern that catechesis be connected to the liturgical year, draw from liturgical sources, and present the riches of liturgical symbols and rites.²¹

The baptismal catechumenate is a time for teaching the language of the faith—the language of Scripture and sacramental rite²²—and this is true for all catechesis; the *Directory* speaks explicitly of the need for children to learn a biblical and sacramental language (no. 207). The faithful need to know the stories of salvation history,²³ so they can think of themselves as part of it and understand how the liturgy connects them to it. Catechesis should

situate the sacraments within the history of salvation by means of a mystagogy which “relives the great events of salvation history in the ‘today’ of her [the Church’s] liturgy.”²⁴

This essential understanding of how God continues his saving work in the “today” of the liturgy helps all being catechized “to open themselves to this ‘spiritual’ understanding of the economy of salvation.”²⁵

Liturgical formation must not only explain what the liturgy and sacraments are, but also “offer an experience of the different kinds of celebration and it must make symbols and gestures, etc., known and loved” (no. 87). The

²⁰ *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 71, quoting John Paul II, *Catechesi tradendae*, no. 23; cf. *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 207: “a privileged means” of inculcation is “liturgical catechesis with its richness of signs in expressing the gospel message and its accessibility to so great a part of the people of God.”

²¹ *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 30. Liturgical catechesis is to make “constant references to the great human experiences represented by the signs and symbols of liturgical actions originating in Jewish and Christian culture.” *Ibid.*, no. 117.

²² In no. 154, the *General Directory for Catechesis* states: “Secure possession of the language of the faith is an indispensable condition for living that same faith.” While this is stated in reference to the “formulae” of the faith, these formulae are said to include biblical and liturgical texts and prayers such as the Our Father.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 108a.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 108, citing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1095. The *General Directory for Catechesis* adds: “cf. CCC 1075; CCC 1116; Cf. CCC 129–30 and 1093–94.”

²⁵ *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 108 citing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1095.

Directory calls for liturgical catechesis that will “educate the disciples of Jesus Christ ‘for prayer, for thanksgiving, for repentance, for praying with confidence, for community spirit, for understanding correctly the meaning of the creeds.’”²⁶ As part of a process of formation and conversion, then, liturgical catechesis must teach people how to relate to God through the liturgy, how to pray and worship, how to be open to God, how to be reverent, and how to celebrate.

In regard to the fourth dimension of conversion, the *Directory* expresses concern that, sometimes, contemporary catechesis is not providing enough formation for missionary activity (no. 30). It calls for catechesis to equip Christians for mission both in society and by cooperating in ecclesial services, and discusses the role of the faithful in evangelization (no. 86).

The *Directory* points out the necessity that catechesis cover *all* these dimensions of conversion: knowledge of the faith, moral formation, living as part of the community of faith, prayer, liturgical life, missionary spirit: “When catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain full development” (no. 87). Further, these dimensions are interrelated and should inform each other.²⁷

The Liturgical Context of Catechesis and the Role of the Word Proclaimed

The *Directory* makes clear that as catechesis addresses itself to these areas for conversion, it is not only providing facts but, guided by the Holy Spirit, it seeks “to encourage a true experience of faith, and thus a *filial encounter with God*” (no. 143, emphasis added). Catechesis is the “untiring echo” of the “wonderful dialogue” of salvation “that God undertakes with every person.”²⁸ Catechesis is to enable followers of Christ to “profess the faith *from the ‘heart’*”²⁹ and to help evoke the affective and deeper spiritual dimension of faith.³⁰ Since the aim of catechesis is “to encourage a living, explicit, and fruitful profession of faith, the Church, in order to achieve this, transmits to catechumens and those to be catechized her *living experience* of the gospel, her faith, so that they may appropriate it and confess it” (no. 66, emphasis added).

²⁶ *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 85 quoting the *General Catechetical Directory* (1971), no. 25b.

²⁷ *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 87; cf. nos. 35, 122.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 144; cf. no. 143.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 67, emphasis added. The *General Directory for Catechesis* citation reads: “Cf. *CT* 20; St. Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus*, I, chap. 4, n. 8; *CCL* 46, 128–29.” Cf. *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 55.

³⁰ Cf. *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 144.

In the first part of this essay, we saw how, because the baptismal catechumenate seeks to bring people into living relationship with God in Christ through conversion of both mind and heart, it is centered around liturgical rites—since worship is the privileged *locus* for the personal meeting with God which precipitates conversion. The recovery of the liturgical context for conversion in the baptismal catechumenate today is another of its aspects which can provide a source of inspiration for all catechesis. The *General Directory for Catechesis* explicitly identifies “the marginalization of liturgical celebrations in catechetical programs,” and inadequate instruction concerning the meaning of the liturgy as problems that need to be remedied (no. 30). In describing the pedagogy of Jesus during his earthly ministry, the *Directory* depicts it as including “the use of all the resources of interpersonal communication, such as word, silence, metaphor, image, example, and many diverse signs as was the case with the biblical prophets” (no. 140). It is in the context of the Church’s worship, through its rites, symbols, and proclamation of Scripture, that the Risen Lord continues to teach this way today.

Further, presenting catechesis in a setting of worship allows it to be received in an atmosphere of prayer, which helps people to listen more closely for what the Lord might be teaching them. The *Directory* affirms that

When catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the entire Christian life reaches its summit. This climate is especially necessary when the catechumen and those to be catechized are confronted with the more demanding aspects of the gospel and when they feel weak, or when they discover the mysterious action of God in their lives. (no. 85, emphasis added)

Since “genuine catechesis . . . is that catechesis which helps to perceive the action of God throughout the formative journey,” it “encourages a climate of listening, of thanksgiving, and of prayer” (no. 145).

Looking to the baptismal catechumenate as model for all catechesis leads not only to an appreciation of how the liturgy’s climate of prayer and worship can serve as context for conversion, but also to renewed awareness of the key importance of the Word proclaimed in the liturgy, which evokes and nurtures conversion. The *General Directory for Catechesis* notes that “the Word of God is celebrated in the sacred liturgy, where it is constantly proclaimed, heard, interiorized, and explained” (no. 95), and points out that when the ministry of the Word “is realized in the context of a sacred action, it is an integral part of that action” (no. 51).

Drawing on *Dei Verbum*, number 21, the *Directory* speaks of the disciples of Jesus as nourished at the twofold table of the Word and of the

Body of Christ: “The gospel and the Eucharist are the constant food for the journey to the Father’s House” (no. 70). When discussing how the entire Christian community is called to continuing formation and growth in holiness, the *Directory* points out that it therefore needs great faithfulness to the Holy Spirit, constant nourishment in the Eucharist, and “continuing education in the faith, listening all the time to the Word” (no. 70). At this table of the Word of God, which the liturgy provides,

the homily occupies a privileged position since it “takes up again the journey of faith put forward by catechesis and brings it to its natural fulfillment, at the same time it encourages the Lord’s disciples to begin anew each day their spiritual journey in truth, adoration, and thanksgiving.”³¹

The *General Directory for Catechesis* also stresses the importance of the lectionary and Sunday homily for catechesis, in its discussion of inculturation (no. 207).

In the rites of the catechumenate, the proclamation of the Word extends the story of God’s saving work outward from the Scriptures being proclaimed to the hearers who are being drawn into that story as they listen. This also can provide a model for postbaptismal catechesis that flows from the Word proclaimed in the Sunday assembly where the Church “relives the great events of salvation history in the ‘today’ of her liturgy”;³² in this way, “the catechetical message helps the Christian to locate himself in [salvation] history and to insert himself into it, by showing that Christ is the ultimate meaning of this history” (no. 98). The *Directory* also speaks of the need for biblical catechesis to “help interpret present-day human life in light of the experiences of the people of Israel, of Jesus Christ and the ecclesial community, in which the Spirit of the Risen Jesus continually lives and works” (no. 117). While not all catechesis takes place in a liturgical context, it is the liturgy “which brings about the most perfect actualization of biblical texts,” where “written text thus becomes living Word.”³³ The rites of the catechumenate thus provide a model of how all catechesis should flow from God’s living Word and draw hearers into understanding

³¹ Ibid., no. 70. The citation reads: “Cf. *CT* 48; cf. *SC* 52; *DV* 24; *DcG* (1971) 17; *Missale romanum, Ordo lectionum missae*, no. 24 Editio Typica Altera, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1981.”

³² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1095. Cf. *General Directory for Catechesis*, nos. 107, 108, especially the reference to *Dei Verbum*, no. 2: “the ‘deeds and words’ of Revelation point to the ‘mystery contained in them’; catechesis helps to make the passage from sign to mystery” (original emphasis). Cf. *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 128.

³³ Pontifical Biblical Commission, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church,” *Origins* 23 (January 6, 1994): IV.C.1.

their lives and all reality in terms of God's saving action in human history culminating in Jesus Christ.

Even as those preparing for Baptism are nourished by the proclamation of Scripture and catechesis at the rites of the catechumenate, so "those who are already disciples of Jesus Christ also require to be constantly nourished by the Word of God so that they may grow in their Christian life."³⁴ The *Directory* affirms that all catechesis should educate the believer in the faith "in such a manner that the entire person, at his deepest levels, feels enriched by the Word of God" (no. 67). One of the tasks of adult catechesis is to "introduce adults to a faith-filled reading of Sacred Scripture and the practice of prayer" (no. 175). In fact,

the Church desires that in the ministry of the Word, Sacred Scripture should have a pre-eminent position. In concrete terms, catechesis should be "an authentic introduction to *lectio divina*, that is, to a reading of the Sacred Scriptures done in accordance to the Spirit who dwells in the Church."³⁵

The baptismal catechumenate in the patristic period and today, is centered on the proclamation of Scripture as catalyst for conversion. As *post* baptismal catechesis seeks to recover the catechumenate's goal of inspiring conversion, it is also called to learn how to draw from the catechumenate's appreciation of the key role of the Word, since "faith comes by hearing."

Catechesis as the Responsibility of the Whole Christian Community

The *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity*, cited at the beginning of this essay, clearly stated that the baptismal catechumenate was the responsibility of the entire Christian community. Subsequent Church documents repeated this affirmation and extended it to all catechesis;³⁶ the *Directory*

³⁴ *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 50; cf. no. 94: "All God's children, animated by his Spirit, are nourished by this treasure of the Word." In his preaching, John Chrysostom referred to the Scriptures as nourishment and urged his hearers, therefore, to go back over Scripture passages they heard in Church when they were at home.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 127. The citation reads: "MPD 9c. Cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, IV.C.3." Cf. *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 71, which calls for "the study and exploration of Sacred Scripture, read not only in the Church but with the Church and her living faith, which helps to discover divine truth, which it contains, in such a way as to arouse a response of faith. The '*lectio divina*' is an eminent form of this vital study of Scripture," and cites *Dei Verbum*, nos. 21–25; and Pontifical Biblical Commission, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," IV.

³⁶ *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 220; for additional references, see *ibid.*, no. 220 note 15.

affirms: “The entire Christian community should feel responsible for this service” (that is, catechesis) (no. 219). In order to encourage continuing conversion, “it is necessary to have a Christian community which welcomes the initiated, sustains them, and forms them in the faith” (no. 69), and in order for adult catechesis to be authentic and effective there must be attention to “the involvement of the community so that it may be a welcoming and supportive environment” (no. 174).

This is because the very faith Christians seek to grow in is found incarnated in the lives of the members of the Christian community: “Catechesis is nothing other than the process of transmitting the gospel, as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it, and communicates it in many ways” (no. 105). The role of the community in handing on the faith is seen not only in the way individual members live it out, but also in the way the faith is lived in members’ relationships with each other:

Catechesis therefore is an educational activity which arises from the particular responsibility of every member of the community, in a rich context of relationships, so that catechumens and those being catechized are actively incorporated into the life of the community.³⁷

According to the *Directory*,

Catechetical pedagogy will be effective to the extent that the Christian community becomes a point of concrete reference for the faith journey of individuals. This happens when the community is proposed as a source, *locus*, and means of catechesis. Concretely, the community becomes a visible place of faith-witness. It provides for the formation of its members. . . . It constitutes itself as the living and permanent environment for growth in the faith. (no. 158)

For this reason, personal contact between community members is essential for catechesis “since the gift of the Holy Spirit comes to the subject from one living person to another.”³⁸

Members of the community who actively serve as catechists have a mission entrusted to them by the Church (no. 224), work “in the name of the Church” (no. 219 note 13), and need to keep alive in themselves

³⁷ Ibid., no. 220. Further, “at the end of the catechetical process, it is the Christian community that welcomes the catechized in a fraternal environment, ‘in which they will be able to live in the fullest way what they have learned;’” quoting John Paul II, *Catechesi tradendae*, no. 24.

³⁸ *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 158. Similarly, “the personal relationship of the catechist with the subject is of crucial importance.” Ibid., no. 156.

“an awareness of being sent by the Church” (no. 247). The *Directory* explains how the vocation of laypeople to catechesis springs from Baptism and is strengthened by Confirmation, through which “they participate in ‘the priestly, prophetic, and kingly ministry of Christ’” (no. 231). It further describes how some laypeople experience a particular vocation from the Lord Jesus to the ministry of catechesis and how the Church discerns their vocation and commissions them (no. 231), affirming that “diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the *formation of lay catechists.*”³⁹ According to the *General Directory for Catechesis*, catechists are essentially mediators, facilitating communication between people and the mystery of God, who must remember that it is God who gives faith, and that their catechetical work must “draw support from faith in the Holy Spirit and from prayer” (no. 156). The Church must therefore “promote the interior formation of catechists” through such means as “prayer groups, the fraternal life, spiritual sharing, and spiritual retreats” (no. 247). Both catechumens and others who receive catechesis can find in lay catechists “a Christian model for their future as believers” (no. 230).

The restoration of the baptismal catechumenate has thus led to the recovery of the responsibility of the whole community of the baptized in the formation of new Christians. This now provides a model for the renewed awareness of the community itself in its common life as “living catechesis,” and of the role of the faithful in catechesis. As the *Directory* points out, “the theological, spiritual, and pastoral implications of the ecclesial nature of catechesis are considerable.”⁴⁰

Conclusion

The baptismal catechumenate, as it existed in the early centuries of the Church, and as it has been restored in the life of the Church today, seeks to provide converts with clear knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ as Saving Lord, and with a means of entering into union with him as members of his Body, the Church, by the power of his Spirit, to the glory of the Father. In order to accomplish this, the catechumenate is focused on providing formation of the whole person, which fosters genuine conversion in the areas of knowledge of God, moral life as part of the Christian community, ability to relate to God through prayer and worship, and entering into the Church’s mission. This repenting of sin

³⁹ Ibid., no. 234. For the criteria for this formation, see *ibid.*, no. 237f.

⁴⁰ Ibid., no. 219; cf. no. 28: “It is urgent that an authentic ecclesiology of communion be promoted and deepened in order to arouse in Christians a deep ecclesial spirituality.”

and dying and rising with Christ and learning to live by his Spirit, is mediated in a privileged way through liturgical celebrations, especially in the proclamation of the Word; and the whole Christian community is called to be involved in helping new members to enter into life in Christ. It is *this* reality, this “preparatory school for the Christian life,” which the *General Directory for Catechesis* lifts up as a source of inspiration and enrichment for all catechesis (no. 91). The *Directory* is not proposing specific new structures, programs, or lesson plans for religious education, but rather seeking to extend catechumens’ grace-filled experience of holistic conversion and formation in Christ, mediated through the liturgy in the context of the community, to *all* the baptized, so that the faithful may ever more deeply *be* faithful, and bring the gospel to the new millennium. It is this that the *Directory* has in mind when it affirms:

“The model for all catechesis is the baptismal catechumenate when, by specific formation, an adult converted to belief is brought to explicit profession of baptismal faith during the Paschal Vigil.” *This catechumenal formation should inspire the other forms of catechesis in both their objectives and in their dynamism.* (no. 59, emphasis added)

N V

Book Reviews

Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction edited by Thomas F. Weinandy, Daniel Keating, and John Yocum (*London/New York: T&T Clark International, 2004*), xvii + 276 pp.

THINKING ABOUT the causes that led to the decline of Thomistic theology in the post-Vatican II era, one can discern, I believe, at least two main reasons. First, the texts of the council on the role of Aquinas in catholic theology (*Optatam totius*, no. 16; *Gravissimum educationis*, no. 10) were perceived as referring only to formal characteristics of Aquinas's mind such as his intellectual capacity for discernment and penetration regarding theological questions, the way in which he was able to receive the tradition before him, his openness for a dialogue with the contemporary theology of his time, his search for a harmony between reason and faith, and so on. Second, there arose an apparent contradiction between the appeal of the council for a *ressourcement* of theology in Scripture and Aquinas's "scholastic" theology, which seemed to leave little room for Aquinas as a biblical theologian. Based on a renewed reading of the statements of the Church on Aquinas and the results of contemporary Thomistic scholarship, the volume presented here offers a unique overview of the significance of Aquinas's dogmatic theology by discussing the principal themes of Christian doctrine.

By way of response to the second objection mentioned above, it is fitting that the volume opens with an essay by Christopher T. Baglow on the relationship between Sacred Scripture and sacred doctrine in Aquinas (1–25). After describing the methods and presuppositions of Scripture and doctrine, Baglow concludes the first theoretical part of his essay with the observation that, for Aquinas, the two are actually one. The second part gives three examples of this "fundamental identification" (9) between Scripture and doctrine. First, he argues in favor of the suggestion made by André Hayen that the structure itself of the *Summa theologiae* is a biblical one. Second, he exemplifies Thomas as a biblical thinker in the *Summa* by presenting the sections on the resurrection of Christ and

on the Old Law. Third, Baglow discusses Thomas's "greatest achievement," his exegetical corpus and, more in particular, his commentary on John 6:26–72. In it he discerns a "particular theological model" (18), namely, "a fusion between the exegetical and the theological which" draws "the Catholic teaching on the Eucharist into a natural cohesion with the text by first drawing that doctrine from the text itself" (20).

David B. Burrell (27–44) elucidates the Christian doctrine of a free and unique Creator, the "hidden element in the philosophy of St. Thomas" (Josef Pieper). Philosophically, he focuses on the way Aquinas articulates the non-reciprocal relation of Creator and creature by developing the platonic notion of participation in order to distinguish the two without separating them. Theologically, he recalls the work of Gilles Emery, arguing that "a complete and proper understanding of creation requires knowledge of the processions of the divine persons" (42).

The essays by Gilles Emery and Thomas Weinandy on, respectively, the Trinity (45–65) and the Incarnation (67–89) are some of the most lucidly written presentations in this field that I know of. They provide an excellent entry into the most speculative part of Aquinas's dogmatic theology. Especially these elements of Aquinas's doctrine have received considerable criticism in the twentieth century because of the perceived dichotomy between an Aristotelian metaphysics of substance and an existential-Christian relational metaphysics. Emery and Weinandy on the contrary succeed in showing how, for Aquinas the theologian—precisely through the use of metaphysical distinctions—relation not only lies at the heart of God but also at the heart of the world through the salvific action of the divine persons and finally at the heart of every human, created being insofar as its destination lies in the beatific vision of God through the union with the risen incarnate Christ. Aquinas finds a strong confirmation of this in what has been done and suffered by Christ during his life for "every action of Christ is for our instruction." Questions 27–59 of the *tertia pars* of the *Summa* on the life of Christ are therefore studied next in the essay by Michael J. Dodds (91–115).

By means of a careful examination of the texts, Romanus Cessario (117–37) shows that Aquinas, particularly in his mature writings, conceives satisfaction within a framework that seeks to harmonize the themes of image perfection in the human creature and satisfactory suffering in Christ. Rightly understood, "satisfaction" belongs to the dynamism of love working in history and through the sacraments of the Church to restore the fallen *imago Dei*. Following the increased attention given to Aquinas's biblical commentaries, Daniel A. Keating (141–58) concludes from his exacting study of the biblical works that salvation "begins and

ends with divine action,” but “respects the integrity of human nature and illuminates its transformation at every step” into the image of Christ (157). In the light of this conclusion, a discussion on the *Joint Declaration on Justification* by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church in 1999, would have contributed considerably to his argument.

Two articles are devoted to Aquinas’s treatise on the sacraments. John P. Yocum (159–81) succeeds in giving a well-structured account of the nature of the sacraments, the need for sacraments, their effects, and their order. Again the Christocentric nature of Aquinas’s theology comes to the fore: the initiation of the new life in the risen Christ comes about through the signs of the sacraments as effecting reminders of Christ’s act of perfect self-offering to the Father. The sacraments are therefore “an extension of the effects of the Incarnation” (172). The consummation of all the sacraments in the liturgy of the Eucharist is the topic of the essay by Matthew Levering (183–97). He argues that Aquinas is able to offer us the necessary guidelines in order to avoid the “pitfalls” of spiritualizing or instrumentalizing the liturgy of the Eucharist. On the one hand, a visible self-offering accords with God’s providence for human history. The purpose, on the other hand, of the liturgical action lies first and primarily in sharing in the action of his sacrifice, that is, in himself through whom we receive the gift of deification.

In his essay “Thomas on the Church” (199–223), Herwi Rikhof starts from the assertion that Aquinas, by his “definition” of the Church as *congregatio fidelium*, focuses on the “concrete historical community” (208) and, from there on, gives an in-depth analysis of two of Aquinas’s various images to describe the nature of the Church, that is, “body” and “*domus*.” His conclusion however that “the Church on all accounts [is] an historical phenomenon” (220) stands in need of discrimination, for, as such, it would not have been agreed upon by Aquinas. Moreover, as Leo Cardinal Scheffczyk recently has shown in regard to the discussion on the relationship between the universal Church and the local churches, the Church according to Aquinas is an ontological reality and can, as such, not be reduced to a historical reality.¹

Aquinas’s eschatology, as Matthew Lamb convincingly shows (225–40), does not form a mere appendix but is intrinsically connected to the whole of his theology as the subaltern science of God and of the blessed in heaven. The greatest contribution of Lamb’s essay consists foremostly in

¹ See Leo Scheffczyk, “Das Problem der ‘eucharistischen Ekklesiologie’ im Lichte der Kirchen- und EucharistieLehre des heiligen Thomas van Aquin,” in *Indubitante ad veritatem. Studies offered to Leo J. Elders*, ed. Jürgen Vijgen (Budel: Damon, 2003), 388–405.

showing that an eschatology comes forth from a continuing search for the intelligibility and reason operative in the divine wisdom as revealed by faith.

Apart from the discussions on the Immaculate Conception, Aquinas's Marian thinking has received little attention by scholars. A fact which is remarkable considering the importance of the Virgin Mary in the teaching of John Paul II in general and Louis de Montfort, from which stems his heraldic device "Totus tuus," in particular. Aidan Nichols (241–60), therefore, offers a much welcomed chronological overview of practically all of Thomas's sayings on Mary from his commentary on the *Sentences* to the *Summa theologiae*, in order to conclude that Thomas was a *doctor marianus*. Combining a deep sense of the texts with a profound knowledge of Thomas's sources and recent literature, this essay can provide the basics for a book-length study of Aquinas's Mariology in relationship to the teachings of Vatican II and John Paul II.

The essays in this volume combine an extensive historical knowledge of the results of previous Thomistic scholars in and outside of the English-speaking world with a thorough knowledge of the works of Aquinas, emphasizing his biblical commentaries. They are lucidly written, manifesting as well the philosophical qualities of the contributors. It has the potential to lead many theologians back to Aquinas and, thus, to enrich mainstream theology. Is this comprehensive book on Aquinas's doctrine not a sign that times are ready for a series of students' manuals of catholic theology, written from a Thomistic perspective? N V

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A Biblical History of Israel by Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III (*Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003*), 416 pp.

A BIBLICAL HISTORY of Israel is chiefly a defense, in theory and in practice, of writing a history of Israel using biblical evidence and, in fact, of the possibility of any history of Israel in the first place. The authors describe the roots of this crisis in recent historiography on Israel and propose to consider all the evidence: biblical, extra-biblical, and archaeological. Their main principle is that one should accept traditional historical testimony in general, setting it aside only when it can be proven false. Another point of method is the use of literary analysis to make sense out of the textual evidence. Based on this approach, they narrate the history of Israel from Abraham to the postexilic period, considering the major

historical turning points and issues, such as the plausibility of the conquest and the reality of David and of Solomon's empire. By restricting themselves to major issues, they can write with sufficient detail for the scholar and sufficient brevity for the layman. The book also includes extensive endnotes and indices (one hundred pages all told). In summary, the book builds up the evidence instead of tearing it down. It uses historical evidence to shed light on the Scriptures and uses the Scriptures to furnish a comprehensive account of Israel's story.

Part one addresses the method for writing a history of Israel. The first chapter analyzes the modern problems in this discipline through specific case studies and through a general treatment on the principles and origin of modern and postmodern historiography. Chapters 2 to 5 defend a solution, which culminates in a description and summary of the authors' project in chapter 5.

In chapter 1, the authors begin with K.W. Whitelam's assertion that it is no longer possible to write a *biblical* history of Israel at all. The Bible presents only a partial perspective with an ideological slant. It is written as literature that shows itself fictitious, not objective. Finally, there are no trustworthy witnesses that corroborate it sufficiently. They point to arguments by scholars like J. A. Soggin, J. M. Miller, and J. Hayes who hold similar, though less pessimistic, views. In a summary, the authors remark, "All that Whitelam does is push Miller and Hayes to be more consistent in following through to their conclusion their governing assumption and method" (18). The problem is that none of these scholars has been able completely to overcome the three problems of ideology, literary artistry, and absence of corroboration. They merely look for texts in the Bible that show less evidence of these difficulties.

Much of part one, then, attempts to solve the problems. The authors identify the roots of them in "the general suspicion of tradition that has been such a feature of post-Enlightenment thought generally, and which has in differing degrees marked out the history of the history of Israel in the same period" (19). Historians became particularly suspicious because they desired to subject history to a rigorous "inductive scientific analysis" (20), a desire occasioned by the success and prestige of the natural sciences. They wanted to tell objectively "how it really was" (21), in opposition to the Bible. Because of this suspicion, "arbitrary choices about starting points in the tradition, ungrounded in convincing argument, have marked out the history of the history of Israel" (27). In short, some scholars are simply more suspicious than others.

Chapters 2 through 5 offer the solution. In chapter 2, the main argument is that a priori skepticism of tradition or testimony makes human

knowledge impossible. In fact, “we are . . . intellectually reliant upon what others tell us when it comes to what we call knowledge” (45). We may be suspicious of testimony if there is good reason, but we may not reject it out of hand. Intellectual life, they argue, simply does not function that way.

In chapter 3, continuing the same line of thought, they argue that testimony requires less corroboration than historians usually suppose. Nor does a source’s proximity to the event objectively corroborate it, since all witnesses, whether proximate or remote, inevitably interpret the event (57). They argue that there is no reason why source texts should not “be given the benefit of the doubt in regard to their statements about the past unless good reasons exist to consider them unreliable in these statements and with due regard (of course) to their literary and ideological features” (55). Their best point is that “contradictory” archaeological evidence does not itself falsify textual witness. As they note, archaeology is just as interpretive and ideological as narrative historiography (63). Ultimately, their objection is not so much to attempts at verification or falsification as it is to privileging some often scanty forms of evidence over others and to extreme distrust in texts simply because of literary or ideological qualities.

Thus, in the same chapter, they also address the issue of ideology and conclude that it does not drain the historical value from a text. All written testimonies, they argue, contain ideology (implicitly including those of modern historians), and there is no good reason to suppose such testimony to be historically worthless (68–69). While this is true, one would like a clearer, more substantive argument on this point. A cynic might be tempted to swear off history altogether since all historiography is also ideological.

Further, they argue that one cannot permit modern ideology to determine readings of a text’s plausibility through the so-called “principle of analogy,” the notion that all time exhibits “normal, customary, or at least frequently attested, events and conditions” (70), which should be used as standards to judge the plausibility of an account. Against this principle, they remark that “real human experience (as opposed to the artificial construct of ‘common human experience’) is, of course, vast, differentiated, and complex” (71). Later, they will argue that there is “a measure of truth and wisdom” (226) in the use of analogy, but on a practical level, they adopt the position that it cannot be used as a bed of Procrustes to amputate and mutilate the textual witness itself.

In chapter 4, they argue that literary art need not obliterate a text’s historical witness, because history is in many respects an artistic portrait (87). It presents a coherent picture as opposed to a jumble of isolated

events (84). Moreover, the presence of literary art makes possible the fruitful application of literary analysis, as they argue in part two regarding the book of Joshua: “One of the best ways to gain a sense of what a particular narrative is about is to pay close attention to how the narrative begins and ends and to how it is structured as a whole” (149). Ultimately, their common-sense observation that men experience life itself as a narrative is a valuable contribution.

Part two undertakes the history. Chapter 6 considers the patriarchal narratives, particularly the story of Joseph and the rise of Moses, as well as the Exodus. Chapter 7 considers the Israelites’ conquest and settlement of the land, with an emphasis on fitting Joshua and Judges together as history. Chapters 8 through 10 consider the monarchy, primarily David and Solomon (as one would expect, given their importance). Chapter 11 treats the exile. The book fizzles out somewhat after chapter 9 and the discussion of Solomon. A couple of highlights from part two will make clear what the book has to offer.

Chapter 7 on the settlement puts the authors’ methods into practice very nicely. They survey the historical reconstructions currently circulating in the discipline (139–47). Then, they turn to the biblical sources. There is a clear presentation of the chiasmic structure of Judges that depicts a *peripeteia* in Israel’s attempt to possess the land, as well as a distinction between *subjugation* of the land and *possession* of it. This distinction shows how Joshua, which depicts, not a total annihilation, but a crushing subjugation of the Canaanites, agrees with Judges, which depicts not the contradiction of Joshua, but the gradual results of the Israelites’ attempt to *take possession* of the land. The authors remark that other Near Eastern “conquest accounts” are given to hyperbole and that Joshua, like them, should not be read as indicating a total annihilation. They corroborate this conclusion with internal evidence from Joshua itself. They conclude with a survey of archaeological excavations of sites mentioned in the conquest, such as Jericho and Hazor, thus completing their survey of all three types of evidence.

Another highlight is the reconstruction of Saul’s kingship and David’s rise to power. Here, they argue how the structure of Saul’s accession to the throne, in fact, indicates that he did not have a rightful claim to the throne because he delayed fulfillment of the customary test “by engaging in some feat of arms or military action” (210) expected before a king could be confirmed in office. Further, Saul adds to his shoddy performance by failing to meet the second part of the test, viz., waiting for Samuel, thus showing “a fundamental inability or unwillingness to submit to the divine rule, as mediated through the prophet, and thus a fundamental

unsuitability to be king in Israel” (214). The authors proceed to explain how in this context the biblical text presents Jonathan as accepting Saul’s rejection and thus having plausible reason to assist David’s accession in his place (225–27).

On the whole, one is impressed with the authors’ attempt to recover a meaningful approach to Israel’s history. Undoubtedly their most valuable contribution on that score is the insistence that literary analysis has an important role in historiography. They point to the past’s intrinsic narrativity and, thus, show that they can take the Bible seriously as narrative history. More important (although the authors do not emphasize this fact), literary analysis permits a truly *ad fontes* method because it reveals what the sources are and are not saying. They take advantage of this fact throughout to reconcile apparent contradictions between biblical accounts, such as that between Joshua and Judges.

On the other hand, aside from a few passages where greater clarity concerning the principles would be desirable, one might be disappointed by the authors’ failure to address the cultural ethos, hopes, and expectations of Israel in any depth (cf. N. T. Wright’s *The New Testament and the People of God*). For instance, they devote only a single paragraph to discussing the significance of the Exodus for the Israelites, and although they note its importance, for them it does not figure in providing any overall view of Israel’s history. The result is that although the study shows several moments of luminous coherence, it lacks a strong sense of the coherence of the biblical sources as a whole. It seems the authors were unable or unwilling to push their insistence on the coherence of biblical testimony all the way to a fully unified presentation of Israel’s history and an emphasis on the narrative of the whole canon. In all fairness, the book is more concerned with offering a solution to a problem (and to particular conflicts in the evidence) than to the overall view of Israelite history.

In the end, readers are most likely to find this history valuable because of its plausible reconstructions and reconciliations of apparent conflicts in the historical evidence. Its overview of the historical discipline, coupled with its extensive endnotes, also makes it a valuable reference tool. On the level of method and theory, the authors have proposed a solution, which although perhaps not entirely satisfactory, is nevertheless worthwhile because it debunks some of the fallacies of extreme historical criticism and offers a common-sense approach to serious consideration of historical sources without wholly abandoning intelligent questioning of them. In the final analysis, the book’s best aspect relates both to its method and to its actual historical reconstructions. The authors’ use of narrative literary criticism enables them to respect the literal sense of the

sources and to present riches in them that otherwise would remain hidden. For that reason, if for no other, the book is valuable. N-V

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A Philosophy of Hope: Josef Pieper and the Contemporary Debate on Hope by Bernard Schumacher, translated by D. C. Schindler (*New York: Fordham University Press, 2003*), xii + 317 pp.

THE FIRST of the virtues that Josef Pieper (1904–1997) addressed in 1934 in a now-classic series of essays on the cardinal and theological virtues was courage; in the very next year, as things in Germany continued to darken, he took up the virtue of hope. The end of the war did not mean the end of darkness, however, neither political nor intellectual, and Pieper returned to the topic of hope and related themes throughout his career. Just think of *Death and Immortality*, *The End of Time*, and *Hope and History*. In wanting to understand Pieper on hope, Schumacher is aiming at a major part of Pieper's work. The scope of this book is therefore ambitious, and doubly so in that Schumacher wants to put Pieper in dialogue with other contemporary thinkers on hope. The main dialogue partner is Ernst Bloch, although Jean-Paul Sartre, Gabriel Marcel, and a host of lesser figures make many appearances.

Schumacher executes his program in six chapters. Chapter one lays out the anthropological and ontological foundations of Pieper's treatment of hope. Schumacher recalls Pieper's consideration of the distinction of artificial things, whose essence is fixed by the human mind, and natural things, whose essence is fixed by the divine mind of the Creator. Because he is created, man's essence precedes his existence, and already determines the nature of what human happiness and the fulfillment of human freedom must look like. Because man's being is not-yet-being and is realized only in time, this fulfillment is not achieved without the exercise across time of human freedom. For the same reason, and granted the difficulty of fulfillment, this fulfillment must be an object of hope. It further follows that our freedom is necessary to the fulfillment of hope. Since we are created, however, the shape of happiness and the fulfillment of our desire will answer to the contours of the original gift of being and the structure of our natural desire. The ontological frame of Pieper's thought on human hope is a metaphysics of created gift, just as its anthropological frame is that of freedom deployed in time.

Chapter two reviews the characteristics of hope, first, as Pieper recounts them in dependence on St. Thomas, who teaches him to understand the object of hope as the possible but difficult good, and second, according as Pieper may be brought into dialogue with contemporary thinkers. It is in this chapter that Schumacher retails Pieper's insight that an act of hope is intrinsic to the very deployment of reason and the exercise of philosophy itself.

Chapter three distinguishes ordinary hopes (*espoirs*) for this, that, and other good things, and fundamental hope (*espérance*), whose object is "salvation," the complete fulfillment of man according to his nature, and notes the limit situations such as martyrdom where fundamental hope emerges. Pieper follows St. Thomas in holding that the only *virtue* of hope (as distinct from the passion of hope, the human attitude of looking forward to the possession of a good difficult to attain) is theological hope, and Schumacher identifies this with fundamental hope. Not only the object of this hope, eternal life with God, but the virtue itself, is therefore a gift of God. There is no natural virtue of hope, according to Pieper following St. Thomas, for the very good reason that in its natural form, like faith or opinion, hope is something that bespeaks imperfection. Hope perfects only when it reaches above itself, to God; it is a virtue in an unqualified sense only according as it conduces to our one, true, final, and supernatural end. Schumacher, to the contrary, thinks it possible to speak of a natural virtue of hope.

Chapter four takes note of the opposites of hope, presumption and despair, and recalls Pieper's retrieval of the ancient notion of the sin of *acedia* (sloth), which can just as easily manifest itself in frenetic activity as in torpor—both are despairing refusals so to act and live as to set oneself on the way to salvation.

Chapter five takes up the warrant of hope. Writing in 1935, Pieper asserts that Christ is the reason of our hope. But, Schumacher says, whenever he subsequently invokes Christ, he indicates that this is an extra-philosophical appeal. On the other hand, Pieper never abandons the view that hope is theological, an infused virtue. So, is what Pieper doing philosophy? And does Pieper have a less Christological, more philosophical justification of hope? The first question is addressed in the next chapter. As to Schumacher's construction of Pieper's justification of hope in the face of death, it can fairly be said that it is, as it were, a justification on the ground of the first article of the Creed alone. It goes like this. The experience of love, as based on the good of the beloved object, is an experience of a gift, a gift of being. But second, beings are connected, and being is a whole. So we arrive at a metaphysics of being as gift. Further,

love bespeaks a desire for eternity, and love wants to be a promise of eternity. Now, this promise is trustworthy, and the experience of being as gift is veridical, if the gift really is *donum* and not just *datum* (K. Schmitz), that is, if it really is the bequest of a Creator God, the sole motive of whose largesse is love. Therefore, we have warrant to think that the permanence and fulfillment of our loves, which is part of salvation, is reasonably hoped for. Moreover, there is a more particular argument from the nature of that part of creation that man is: incorruptibility of substantial form (soul) follows from immateriality of intellectual operation, and immateriality of intellectual operation follows from the immateriality of the truth relation. Philosophically, the career of the soul after death is quite opaque to us, but granted the goodness of the God who makes us, we may hope for some solution to the *aporia* death evokes for an animal that is both spiritual and mortal.

Chapter six takes up the question of hope for humanity as a whole in an atomic age, for the question of hope can never remain a question of my personal fate alone, but, since my personal history is constituted by that of others, must involve also the fate of humanity as a whole. It is in this context that Schumacher addresses the question of whether Pieper's project is philosophical at all. This is an important question for the book. Pieper, and Schumacher with him, very definitely want a *philosophy* of hope. Pieper indeed thinks the question of the object and ground of hope is a question that must be asked by philosophers contemplating the end of history in the second half of the twentieth century. Schumacher seems to find persuasive Pieper's own apologia for the philosophical character of his project. It is philosophical if (1) the requirement that philosophy consider the whole means also that the philosopher who is a believer must take account of things known only by faith; and (2) philosophy is itself constituted by beliefs, even religious beliefs (as was, for instance, Platonism), not all of which can be mediated perspicuously and satisfactorily to philosophical reason itself.

Schumacher can be thanked for the great service he has done in bringing together and making so accessible the enormous amount of material on hope in Pieper's *oeuvre*—which makes me all the more regret the following critical comments.

First, I think Schumacher wrong to identify fundamental hope and theological hope, which he does in chapter three. I do not see that he really shows this identity in Pieper. Moreover, the very thrust of *Hope and History*, where for the first time Schumacher says Pieper makes the distinction between fundamental and ordinary hope “explicit,” counts against identifying them. The question of the book is not whether Christian hope

but whether man's hope can be satisfied within history. Thence the possible candidates for a satisfactory answer are reviewed—Enlightenment Progress, E. Bloch's Marxism, Christianity. So, do we want our human hope to become Christian hope? Fundamental hope is related to theological hope, therefore, in the way the desire for the good is related to the desire for the Infinite Good, or the desire for happiness to the desire for heaven, or the natural desire to know God to the supernatural desire for the beatific vision, or in the way the natural capacity to love God above all things is related to the friendship of charity. The gap between each of these first things and each of these second things is the gap between nature and grace.

Second, though generally in agreement with Pieper, Schumacher disagrees at a key point, and he ought not to. He notes that Pieper held throughout his career that the virtue of hope is theological, but himself asserts to the contrary that there is a natural virtue of hope, indeed, a natural virtue of fundamental hope. I do not see that he really supports this view or answers the objection of St. Thomas to it that Pieper makes his own.

Third, the argument that hope is warranted in the face of death, the argument that rests with the first article of the creed, does not give a correct picture of Pieper. It is not that Schumacher does not truly report certain considerations and arguments of Pieper, but, as the notes show, he is not reporting considerations and arguments expressly warranting the (theological) virtue of hope. They are rather considerations from the phenomenology of love or the metaphysics of goodness and being that show it is reasonable to trust the Creator, but which, by no means, bear closely, precisely, on the quite determinate object of Christian hope. When it is a question of hope, theological hope, I do not see that Pieper himself ever offers anything less than the whole Creed. True, he does not always repeat the expressions of 1935, according to which Christ is the both the "foundation" and "fulfillment" of hope. But after all and as Schumacher knows himself so well, we are dealing with a writer who expressly draws our attention to what is not said in a text. So, if there is not much talk of Christ in *The End of Time*, the third chapter is nonetheless dominated by the figure of the Antichrist. Moreover, *Hope and History* invokes the Incarnation and the Resurrection of the body in explaining the attitude of the Christian to the future, and this quite expressly.

"It is very difficult to keep in mind the fundamentally incomprehensible fact that hope, as a virtue, is something wholly supernatural." I do not think Schumacher has entirely grasped the full scope of this, Pieper's remark of 1935. Unless I am mistaken, Schumacher wants a natural virtue of hope in the face of death, justified by the considerations of natural reason naturally knowing the Creator and the goodness of nature. He

wants something more purely philosophical than Pieper has given us. While always marking the frontiers when he passed over them, Pieper never hesitated to make large raids on the theological. If it is a fact that such forays into theology must be made in speaking much of hope, death, the end of man and of history, it is an important one, and one Pieper shows us throughout his many writings on hope. N V

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Voegelin, Schelling, and the Philosophy of Historical Existence
 by Jerry Day (*Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003*), pp. 320.

JERRY DAY'S ambitious new work offers an important contribution to scholars of intellectual history, philosophy, and religious thought. Day aids recent ventures to recover Schelling's importance while bringing the philosophy of Eric Voegelin to the center stage. These efforts coalesce in what seems to be the narrow focus of the book: the influence of Schelling on Voegelin. Day shows that by recovering the subterranean Schellingian influence in Voegelin's work one gets to the heart of Voegelin's philosophy of history.

Voegelin's massive, five-volume *Order and History* is considered his most impressive contribution to philosophy. This work begins in third-century B.C. Egypt, moves through Israel and Mesopotamia, then treats ancient Greece as well as Christianity. Like most of Voegelin's thought, *Order and History* culminates in a devastating critique of the quagmire that is modern culture and thought. Day informs readers that Voegelin first conceived the work as a textbook on the history of political ideas. He began this project shortly after his exodus from Nazi Vienna to the United States and had accumulated a 4,000-page typescript by the early 1950s. Voegelin's research on Schelling led to a change of course. Voegelin remarks in his *Autobiographical Reflections*:

When I studied [Schelling's] philosophy of myth, I understood that ideas are nonsense: there are no ideas as such and there is no history of ideas; but there is a history of experiences which can express themselves in various forms, as myths of various types, as philosophical development, theological development, and so on. (quoted on 5)

Day seeks to square this candid debt to Schelling with Voegelin's criticism of Schelling scattered in works over many decades. The book does

not offer a compelling reason for this omission, but does argue carefully that the positive assessment of Schelling makes sense in the context of Voegelin's central philosophical tenets about order, consciousness, symbol, and history. Scholars who place Schelling between Fichte and Hegel on the scale of bad and worse spectra of idealism (and this idealism ultimately leads to Gnosticism according to Voegelin) usually ignore Schelling's posthumous publications. Voegelin knew of the later Schelling (published by his son, K. F. A. Schelling, in the collected works after Schelling's death) but often accepted the historiography of those who did not: first F. C. Baur and later Hans Urs von Balthasar. In various writings—inexplicably it seems—Voegelin seemed to forget his own knowledge of the later Schelling when he called him a Gnostic on numerous occasions.

Schelling provides the matrix for *Order and History* with his articulation of negative and positive philosophy. As Day recounts,

Negative philosophy [like Kant's *The Critique of Pure Reason* and Hegel's *Logic*], is so named because it negates particular ("subjective") differences of experience in order to understand the a priori nature of the mind common to all human beings as such. Positive philosophy is so named because it interprets the particular aspects of existence as positive manifestations of the essential order glimpsed by negative philosophy. (128)

Such a construction allows not only for history itself to be taken seriously, but also for God to *intervene* in history, manifested in the mythic and revelatory experiences of the great religious traditions and Greek philosophy. Voegelin picks up this schema and replaces a history of ideas with one of symbols. For an idea is a human construct, but, at least for Voegelin,

the truth of . . . symbols is not informative, it is evocative. . . [Symbols] do not refer to structures in the external world but to the existential movement [that is, the experiences] . . . from which they mysteriously emerge as the exegesis of the movement in intelligibly expressive language. (75)

The essence of Gnosticism (that is, modernity) for Voegelin is the attempt to make the human mind the source for any construction of reality. Consequently, there results a range of philosophies that either become solipsistic (take your pick) or reductionistic (Marxist dialectical materialism, and the psychoanalytic articulation of the collective unconsciousness or the libidinous desire are all *closed* systems of reality). Philosophizing against the backdrop of the Auschwitz ovens, Voegelin thinks the consequences are dire. Philosophers must articulate an openness to divine

intervention in history, but not forsake the intellectual endeavor to envision an *order* out of this *history*.

Day does yeoman's work in explaining Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness and symbol, as well as Schelling's philosophy of history and the divine potencies. He is not uncritical of Schelling and Voegelin in his exposition. Schelling for instance, cannot fit Chinese religion into his historiography of God-consciousness, but does not rethink his historiography (154–57). Voegelin tries to show the compatibility between Pauline and Platonic theology and butchers the biblical text in doing so (261–64). Overall, the book's careful exegesis and hermeneutic generosity lead to an intelligent and persuasive argument for the importance of Schelling and Voegelin; they are critical realists whose response to the collapse of the modern project provides a more sober alternative than postmodern relativism.

To write this kind of book, a scholar needs to be a lot of things: an intellectual historian, a philosopher, a theologian, a Voegelinian, and a Schellingian. This is a tall order, especially for a young scholar. Day's knowledge of the earlier Schelling has a few gaps. The two types of empiricism (sensual and mystical) that Day views as central to Schelling's later philosophy echo the 1803 *University Studies* where the *early* Schelling distinguishes between empirical and pragmatic history. Further, Day never acknowledges the importance of Spinoza for Schelling. Negative and positive philosophy belong to the same reality due to Schelling's transformation of Spinoza's monism. Schelling's early (and open) embrace of Spinoza not only let him move beyond the dichotomies of the subjective idealists (Kant and Fichte) but also informed his understanding of how the potencies operate in God. Day recalls Schelling's debt to Spinoza in a footnote (97 note) but does not recognize its impact.

Day's knowledge of the textual history and reception of Schelling's later philosophy is equally uninformed. True, Schelling published next to nothing after 1810, but the oral reception of his philosophy had a definite impact. Day does not mention the Munich lectures in the 1830s, several of which are now in print. Schelling himself complained to his son Fritz that theologians had stolen from his *Philosophy of Revelation* in an 1837 letter—before Schelling went to Berlin, and before his lectures were published. Further, Day follows the standard account that Schelling's lectures were wildly unsuccessful. Manfred Frank has argued persuasively in his introduction to the lectures (Suhrkamp edition) that Schelling's positive philosophy made an impact on several left-wing Hegelians.

Day's limited facility with some theological concepts occasionally emerges. He states, "As such, [Schelling's process theology] resembles the

theological language that Thomas Aquinas called the *analogia entis*” (37). First, Day uses process theology univocally, not realizing that Schelling’s process differs in important ways from Whitehead and his followers. Second, Aquinas never used the phrase *analogia entis*, a point belabored endlessly by theologians familiar with the drawn-out dispute over analogy that took place between Karl Barth and Erich Przywara (the proper author of the term) in the 1920s and ’30s. Perhaps this confusion stems from Voegelin’s own confusion on the matter (224 note).

Still, if Day overstretches in this ambitious work, the merits of his ambition outdistance minor problems. Many philosophers have been skeptical about the viability of Schelling’s positive philosophy and have questioned whether Voegelin’s marriage of order and history holds up, but few familiar with either thinker doubt that these two at least asked the right questions. If Day’s book sparks people to return to these questions with an energy and seriousness approximate to that expended by Schelling and Voegelin, then Day will have done a great service to the intellectual community. **N.V.**

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Littérature et théologie: Une saison en enfer, volume 1 of Thomas d’Aquin poète théologien by Olivier-Thomas Venard, OP (*Geneva, Switzerland: Ad Solem, 2002*), 510 pp.

THIS BOOK is the first of three volumes dedicated to exploring the act of speaking/writing (*la parole*) and beauty in theology. According to the author’s own summary, this volume wants to reopen a dialogue between theologians and poets by seeking out the theological in literature and the literary in theology, particularly in the *Summa theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas. Venard takes up the study of literary genres in Aquinas first pioneered by Chenu, asking “what literary status ought we give to a *summa*?” Rhetoric and the arts of speech, writes Venard, necessarily involve themselves in theological discourse. This is especially true when, as in the *Summa*, such discourse has a pedagogical end in view. A literary text is one wherein a distinct poetics—that is, a theory governing the making of texts—is at work; Venard suggests that the body of scholarly work on Aquinas’s poetics is limited. It is to remedy this lack that he is writing this extended study.

It is true, writes the author, that Thomas does not seek beauty first. If the fruit of Thomas’s act of writing is beautiful, this is a bonus, a grace: Writing about beautiful mysteries, such as that of the Incarnation, entails

that the writing will itself be beautiful. Nevertheless, the communication of such beauty is a literary craft worthy of study. Venard draws attention to Thomas's life of study and writing as one long interpenetration of written or oral composition and contemplation. To the objection that a concentration on the literary dimensions of the text risks obscuring the theological truths that Aquinas proposes with such clarity, Venard replies that a critical realist study of texts cannot ignore the contingencies of literary creation, the concrete conditions of the elaboration of theological ideas. Attention to the poetics of Aquinas, far from getting in the way of understanding, promotes a deeper grasp of the truths he mediates.

Such a stance is not anti-metaphysical, as some linguistic studies of Aquinas sometimes are. Venard is committed to Thomas's realism, and will indeed address it explicitly in the second volume of the study. But precisely because Thomas's metaphysical commitments are to a cosmos that is revelatory (or, in Venard's terms "epiphanic"), we must take the time to know how the work of the theologian participates in the mediation of beauty, in the intellectual unfolding and clarification of symbol which is part of the role of human beings in the cosmos. For Thomas, proposes Venard, being and writing illuminate each other, not only in the Scriptures, but in every act of writing.

The book proceeds in three parts. The first, titled "From Theology to Literature," brings to light the literary dimensions, the poetics, of the *Summa theologiae*. Here the author reviews recent scholarship on *sacra doctrina*, and on the structure and plan of the *Summa*, and brings to light the three poetic principles of the *Summa*: *determinatio*, *clarificatio*, and causality. The second part of the work proceeds "From Literature to Theology." Beginning with the doomed quest of Rimbaud for God, Venard argues that the "presence in absence" which modern French poetry reveals has many points of contact with the poetics of Aquinas. Returning to Aquinas's Eucharistic hymns, he shows how their symbolism responds to the "presence in absence" of contemporary French poets with a "presence in absence" of its own, the *latens veritas* of the *Adoro te*. The third part, titled "Rhetorical Synthesis and Theological *Summa*," pulls the arguments together by examining the wisdom and humility of Aquinas's rhetorical approach, and further develops recent work on Aquinas's use of *convenientia* in theological discourse. Far from being made impossible by contemporary struggles with the opacity of language to Being and the consequent impossibility of speaking or writing Truth or God, Thomas's theological writing can promote a return of contemporary poetics to its medieval sources in order to be refreshed. It is this return which Venard will develop in the next two volumes.

This is a fascinating work. It takes contemporary poetry seriously and gives it a fresh and invigorating reading. It is also a meticulously researched work, and Venard's writing is compact. These two elements can, for the North American reader unfamiliar with the literary and academic scene in Europe, make for difficult reading. Perseverance is amply rewarded: Venard is a promising scholar with an exciting and convincing vision of Thomistic studies. N.V

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Walking in the Light: Perspectives for Moral Theology Ten Years after *Veritatis Splendor* (Camminare nella luce. Prospettive della teologia morale a partire da *Veritatis Splendor*) edited by L. Melina and J. Noriega (*Rome: Lateran University Press, 2004*), 818 pp.

IT IS ALREADY more than a decade since Pope John Paul II wrote the encyclical *Veritatis splendor*. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of a document that dealt so thoroughly, as never before in the history of the Church's Magisterium, with the moral foundations of the Christian life.

What was the main aim of the encyclical? After the Second Vatican Council, some points of view arose, approaches such as those of consequentialism or proportionalism, that attempted to reduce the richness of the Christian moral experience. The papal encyclical was received and read mainly as an answer to these dangers. But in such a reading of the encyclical, the most important aim of this document was obscured. For the pope intended to focus, above all, on the tremendous richness of the Christian moral experience, on the new horizon with which Christianity shows the splendor of human action. The focus on the several "no's" (the doctrinal clarifications) of the encyclical risked forgetting the main "yes" (the prospects for the way to be covered which the gospel opened up) that was intended by the pope. In other words, the document was more a beginning than an end. In denouncing the separation between truth and freedom and the more important one between faith and life, the encyclical tried to overcome this tragedy of modern man with the special light shed by the gospel.

The book we are reviewing collects the proceedings of a conference held at Rome in November 2003 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the encyclical, a conference that tried to concentrate precisely on that big "yes," on the big challenge that the pope wanted moral theologians to face. It was organized by the International Research Group on Moral

Theology, a group of professors and students under the direction of Msgr. Livio Melina, who, for the last several years, have been trying to deepen the foundations of moral theology (the fruits of these efforts are the volumes published since 1999, the proceedings of the six conferences already held at the Lateran University on the foundations of moral theology, as well as the publication of several monographs in different languages).

A quick look at the structure of the book suffices to make evident the relevance of the proposal. Two main contributions, one by Cardinal Ratzinger, and the other by Msgr. Cañizares, archbishop primate of Spain, open the volume and give important guidelines for the following discussion. It follows the studies held at the congress by the main lecturers, among which we find papers by Angelo Cardinal Scola and Francis Cardinal George, and the contributions of theologians and philosophers such as D. L. Schindler, L. Melina, L. F. Ladaria, M. Rhonheimer, and E. Schockenhoff. In two other sections, other interventions and contributions are collected that are different reactions to the issues exposed by the main lecturers.

In books composed with contributions of different authors, it is sometimes difficult to see the leading thread that gives unity to the whole work. The preparation that lies behind the conference, as well as the dialogue that was offered among the participants, avoided this danger. There is a unitary proposal contained in this book. In what follows, I will try to highlight some of the guidelines, new ways that moral theology is encouraged to walk in the future.

What is the approach the organizers wanted to give to this congress? The title of the volume guides us to a correct understanding: "Walking in the Light," inspired by 1 John 1:7. The mention of the light focuses on the illumination that is given to the human person in order that he may be able to guide his actions. The light reminds us of a gift that precedes our action and is able to guide it. This light is the light of human reason, but also the light of Christ's grace that lets us understand the greatness of our actions, that goes beyond any human capacity.

The conference's motto refers also to "the way," to the action of "walking in the light." The mention of "walking" points out the originality of the moral light, of moral reasoning: It is a special light because it becomes a way, because it is "a truth to be lived out" (*Veritatis splendor*, no. 88). Besides that, the mention of "walking" reflects the fact that this light brings with it a dynamism, that it is a light that has to move along a way. Let us develop some of these important leading threads.

1. "Walking in the *Light*." The light of Christ must be present from the outset in the analysis of ethics. In other words, there is a need to

recover a theological approach to Christian ethics which allows us to overcome the divorce between faith and life. Cardinal Ratzinger points out that this was one of the aims of the council's proposal (42–44). This prospective becomes crucial in order to situate moral action in a wide horizon: The issue which moral theology deals with is no less than the collaboration or synergy of human and divine action. In this way it tries to answer the question of how it is possible that God and man construct an action together. This is the way in which the Christian point of view overcomes the Kantian contradiction between autonomy and heteronomy. The theological approach from which the ethical problems have to be tackled is described with the metaphor of the horizon (47, 61). The horizon is the place where heaven and earth, God and man, join and where all human ways find an orientation and a goal that overcomes the merely human.

2. This light acquires the form of a way. This very fact points out the originality of moral reasoning, and the corresponding specific moral truth. The moral point of view takes its starting point from the Christian experience and involves an original form of intellect (practical reasoning), and not merely a logical deduction from rational principles. Only from this point of view can we approach an adequate understanding of human action.
3. Let us see how this way starts. The beginning of the action takes place with the offering to man of a communion with God. God himself, by the gift of his love, awakens in man the desire to lead a life in communion with him. This gift is the gift of a presence which man discovers through an encounter with Christ. It has to be lived in the form of a friendship, and becomes interior to man thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit. It is this first gift of God, present in man by his grace, which sets in motion the entire moral dynamism.
4. But this is not enough to understand the whole moral life; actually, this light discloses a way to be covered. There indeed exists the risk of remaining in an anti-moralism that does not take into account the very disposition of human nature, the human good that is at stake. This anti-moralism leads to a spiritualism that forgets the importance of human collaboration with God's gift, paralyzing the dynamism of the action and remaining inconclusive. Human nature and culture have to be taken into account. The importance of the consideration of the human body and the human passions and virtues in ethics

appears then with great clarity, in such a way that freedom acquires a new meaning.

The moral life has to be built up, the temporal dimension of it cannot be forgotten. The very taking into account of the human side means to accept the necessity of walking, of building up in time, the communion that the encounter with Christ offers us from the outset. Pneumatology is the way of structuring that dimension of the moral life, because the Holy Spirit guides us to the whole truth in a continuous deepening of our friendship with Christ.

5. The book tries to focus as well on the place where all that occurs, the house of human action, the Church. A contribution by L. Melina (cf. pp. 281–99) tackles the problem of the relationship between the conception of the Church as a community that transmits a way of life to the individuals (as proposed, for example, by S. Hauerwas, A. MacIntyre, and P. Wadell) and the universality of the Church's proposal, that cannot be reduced to one more among the others. Both approaches have to not be contradictory, and their coordination passes through highlighting the link between ecclesiology and Christology (the Church as Spouse of Christ who is the Logos and Eternal Wisdom of the Father).
6. The title of this volume, "Walking in the Light," points to the principal goal of the book: it discloses new ways that need to be walked, it highlights the fact that the moral proposal of the Church has a richness still to be discovered in its fullness. In doing so, it shows how great is the conception of human life, of human vocation and dignity, supported by Christianity. By pointing this out, this book becomes a sign that the new evangelization is possible and at hand. The analysis of the pastoral perspectives, the last section of the volume, displays splendidly the fecundity of the approach proposed. N.V

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