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**** *Lt Ecclesia aedificationem. accipiat.*"**

I Co r . 14: 5.

THE ACT OF THE MYSTICAL BODY.

UNDER the above title Dr. Joseph Fenton contributed to *The Ecclesiastical Review* of May 1939 a very interesting and important paper. Briefly reviewing certain modern writers on the Mystical Body, he more particularly mentions Fr. Mura. There are elements of mystical doctrine which escape these writers, and escape even the magisterial classification of Fr. Mura. "According to this brilliant theologian (Fr. Mura), the Mystical Body of Christ is something which can be understood in function of four real causes—material, form efficient and final. The material cause is definitely the principle of unity but of multiplicity. The material cause of the Mystical Body is the head and the members, those who go to make up the fulness of Christ. The other three causes are principles of unity, and the Mystical Body is one by reason of these. The formal cause is either exemplary or intrinsic. The Mystical Body is one by reason of exemplary causality because there is one and only one Model to which its members must conform. That ultimate exemplar is the Incarnate Word."

Over and above these four causes of unity there is another principle of unity which has been omitted. This principle, according to Dr. Fenton, that "we are deputized and empowered in a special way to make the act and the proper offering of Christ our own". This principle is Dr. Fenton's thesis and its explanation and development his paper is devoted to.

That which is the proper act of the Head is the proper act of the members who are conformed with Him," since "the unity of the Mystical Body is essentially a trichirid-mamic

In this important and practical subject, principles of unity have far-reaching effects and consequences. Hence special care is directed to material treated by Dr. Fenton and ; directed to the farther reason that his -tr king ability and patient horcity both praise and gratitude. A - h treatment. er. without difficulties, to specify these difficulties. sr.

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To -ce urscls as o-fie-s -ee us.

As prJttmr.ar'e* his argume-t Dr. Fenton as-erts:
Adam had sinned, the Second IV-son would r-rt h^e

assumed a human nature " From the very moment of His conception Christ had merited eternal salvation for us in every act He performed, and every hardship He endured. But in the merciful decrees of Divine Providence it had been established that all these other merits of Christ should be ordered to and have their effects from and through the Passion itself."

Though my personal conviction agrees with Dr. Fenton's first assertion, it may be well to remember that many theologians hold a different theory. These therefore, would find it difficult to accept any body of doctrine built exclusively upon it. As regards his second assertion, the first portion seems directly taken from St. Thomas (S. III, Q. 48, a. I) ; the latter part conveys what is usually considered as the more common teaching of the

French theological school. In each case there are difficulties.

Intrinsically any act of Christ, being theandric was quasi-m-finite in merit and so, super-abundantly sufficient to save the world. In a sense also, since a human nature was united to God, the Incarnation might be called the reconciliation of man with Gm. Yet, because the Father did not so will, none of these merited the salvation of the world. The Passion did not a «mW intrinsic to Christ's acts, nor intrinsically did they

effects from and through the Passion itself.

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ire one and the same sacrifice save in the m3nfe5,° Cross. tllc alviÜOT of ,U ron is due to Const

i ^ » an easy conclusion follows: Chose with Ib & «. »

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his *Summa* (I, Q. 44, a. I and many other loci) St. Thomas defines " participation " as the effect of an *essential cause*. Therefore only by participation in Christ and in His Cross can any human person be saved. As participation is used in many <,» perhaps it may be well to make a special note of what seems to be its correct theological meaning. Obviously since, according to St. Thomas, the sacred Humanity, the instrument of the Second Person, ' instrumentally operates in virtue of the Divinity,' and the Passion of Christ, though corporeal, shared yet a certain spiritual virtue from the divinity," whereby it ' can id t . remission of sins," it follows that participation in Const ml l His Passion saves us and makes us " partakers iff the do.u nature " ?

There is another point which requires emphasis. Christ t": principal agent is a free cause; men who receive Christ's salutary effects are also free. The causal relation between Christ and men will always be such as befits and preserves the individui and mutual freedom of each and all. The freedom, thrrctore. of members of the Mystical Body' is conserved both in their union and relations with one another and also in their unions anC «elnt.ons wita Christ. The end and purpose of Chri./s it and relations With men is to enable them in union w.t.l. H.". pj. dace and perfect n themselves, individually and collec'Tei». supernatural and eternal life, unto the greater pin.: of G-d. only lite c.,n £.,!{.Jtvs char Chn-t's !.ouir .ha .irj produces a liv.ng effect which is supernatural!y and v-tally perfective. Thus Dr. lent, a con-iders th.it " f'e t t :- ocr et Cnr <t i, •acrjmet:ta.!y a partlcioant i)r tte t; ana. t.ur' lite members of the Church, rt'cei-e th. l.:c PJ's:<,n i:d death of Christ, not as separated inc- }°:Uals, out as perxns dynamically' joined and configured Him m the sacrament of Baptism, the comment of fa'di." > SUTErICaLS words " sacramentally " and " d r.Tik- 3 V suggest Dr. Fentcr/s view, w.fich may r. w uj T.'t- explicitly treated.

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doctrine c f the sacramcorT ch iracter. " ;' :c ' wh.it is properly the doctr'nc of the Mvsticaf B dv a

Thomas is contained in the question on the sacramental character," His argument is subtle but is not free from ambiguity. For example, he says: "The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ". This is of course quite true. But the Church consists of a "soul" and "body". It would not be correct to say that all who belong to the "soul" also belong to the "body" or vice versa. In this or in similar ambiguities seem to lie the difficulties and perhaps the weaknesses which enter his argument.

No doubt, according to St. Thomas, a sacramental character is a spiritual power or an "instrumental potency" which "enables man to enter into an activity of which Christ is the principal cause in His Passion". "It is an abiding instrumental potency, and as a result the character does not fall under the natural designation of the second species (a permanent *virtus*) of quality, but is only reduced to it." Quite so; the permanent "virtus" or its active power, is from Christ; the permanent potency of uniting authoritatively in a special way with Christ's activity, is the sacramental character. The point is that merely in itself the sacramental character is not united to Christ's activity. A person with a sacramental character, though authoritatively deputed to divine worship, is yet a separate instrument of Christ, and not a conjoined instrument like Christ's own Human Nature. Such person, therefore, requires to be duly united with Christ's activity by sufficient intention and will as well as by certain other divinely appointed means, so that the character operates with Christ's activity, making the person for the time being an efficient instrument of that activity. This union with Christ's activity continues no longer than this particular act. A priest's character is operative with Christ's activity only while the priest is consecrating or sacrificing, or giving some sacrament which requires the power of Holy Orders, but not at other times. This operation and union are permanent but transitory. A sacramental character is in union with Christ's activity, therefore, either while a person is actually receiving or administering a sacrament, whichever the case may be.

St. Thomas Aquinas writes: "The enduring quality which constitutes the members of the Church is the character of Baptism. Difficulties at once arise. It can hardly be maintained that the character of Baptism constitutes us as members of the

incorporates us in the activity of Christ's Passion. These he tells us are due to grace and faith. As supernatural faith is not first grace, such faith always presupposes grace. He also implies that faith is necessary for the valid reception of the sacraments; hence the words *lit per fidem et sacramenta*". A person with the use of reason cannot be validly baptized unless that person has sufficient faith. Persons perpetually devoid of the use of reason (lunatics from birth and always) and infants, by divine ordinance, are endowed with the faith of the Church unto and in the valid reception of baptism *in re*. Thus baptism is called "the sacrament of faith". It is remarkable that St. Thomas does not mention "sacramental character" in his beautiful treatment of Christ's Mystical Body in *Summa* III, Q. 8, a. 3. It is therefore very difficult to see that Dr. Fenton's statements are correct or correctly convey the teaching of St. Thomas.

From what has been said it will appear that, according to the Catholic teaching, only the Sacred Humanity of Christ is His "mediated" instrument. The Mystical Body is not a "conjoined" but a "separate" instrument of Christ. It is united to Christ through the "conjoined instrument" by grace and faith, and by sacraments received *in voto* or *in re*. When members of the Mystical Body possess the baptismal character they are authentically deputed and enabled to avail of Christ's special activity in the other sacraments—a special activity of which they could not avail without a baptismal character. *Positis ponendis*, the baptismal character enables one to receive not only other sacraments which do not impress a character but those which do; those which do give a special consecration unto divine worship, and the character of priesthood enables the priest to make Christ and His sacrifice really and truly present on earth in the Holy Eucharist. Each character also carries with it a particular grace unto its proper use. Yet as divine worship is ever a "provision of the fidei;" and faith abides in the intellectual powers of the intellect so too does the sacramental character. This establishes the fundamental union of men with Christ through grace and faith; and the great importance of the sacramental character. The special interest is that, even without a sacramental character grace and faith can and do unite a man to Christ and

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Fenton's paper.

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strument have one act, and one ctfeet. The act of the prineba!
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um<_rous pa^sjges of his works, may be taken as both safe arc
correct. Take S. IV, Q. 97, a. 5, 3: "Instrumentum autem mt
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no priest may lawfully say Mass—nor indeed anyone lawfully receive any sacrament—without due permission from the Church. Does Trent mean to convey more than this by the words "the sacrifice of Himself by the Church through **(priests)**"? It seems historically certain that "immolandum" signifies here "complete sacrifice" and not merely the element of sacrifice called "immolation", Fr. de la Taille and some others do think that Trent does mean more; their interpretation et Trent seems influenced or dictated by their own personal view of the meaning of Sacrifice. Dr. Fenton somewhat suggests de la Taille's theory; so let the examination proceed.

¶ In the eucharistic sacrifice", he writes, "the Mystical Body acts as the instrument of the Passion of Christ, and in this sacrificial operation it makes the Passion of Christ the act of the Church. The sacrifice of the Mass is, then, in a special and metaphysical sense, the act of the Mystical Body, the tremendous instrumental function in which the baptized person is empowered to participate." He then subjoins: "The Mystical Body of Christ is that organization which exists to offer the sacrifice of the Mass." (Italics mine.) Now according to Dr. Fenton all who have the baptismal character are members of that "organization" and all share in the act of offering, yet not all in the same way. For the Church is an "ordered hierarchical society" and so also is the sacrificial act of the Church "an ordered hierarchical act."—Priests are agents and have an active function; others not priests, are recipients and have a passive function. Further, "Because this action is one in which the Church offers its own the very passion of the Redeemer, the priest who performs this act of sacrifice is said in all truth to assume the person of Christ Himself."

From these statements, it would seem that Dr. Fenton understands the words of Trent "se ipsum . . . immolandum" as the

of Christ to be offered by the Church. The essence, has two essential elements: the passion or immolation of the same by the Church. If either be absent, there is no Mass. Hence he considers this Church-oblation and metaphysical "or pertaining to the essence, and sacrificial." Now this Church-oblation, which truly, is every Mass, being the act of an organization—namely, in which all members of the organization have an o

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hierarchical share; for (some) members, besides having the character of baptism, may also have the character of the r.'-i-r of priesthood. Thus later Dr. Fenton speaks of the "pcopb ' communicating spiritually in Masses at which the priest a; ' ' communicates sacramentally. Finally, through this Chart ■ offering the priest enters into Christ's offering, or the one oiering of the Principal Priest, and so assumes " the person of Chris: Himself ",

quam nisi ex parte Ecclesiae, nec quisquam consecrat valide, nisi vere offerens. Quod si sacerdos praecisus non possit ex parte Ecclesiae offerre, sequeretur eum nec valide posse consecrare." By lus sacerdotal character a priest is deputed as a legate -: ti-Church and ever retains the character of legate: yer he di-

mat oi acting lor the Church. Hence when a heretic, ■ matic, or *excommunicatus* celebrates Mass, no: as a min:'--' ' the Church but absolutely and solely as an officiai ot r.i| sett. ■ Mass is no Mass, and is invalid. It is difficult to say - ■ Fenton would agree that the priest's intention here waiid r.r. ' the efficacy of his sacramental character, granted that sue:, yr really wished to say Mass. Obviously Fr. de la Tallies th:.. lies at the root of his own solution in this matter, but - h * quite so oovious that Dr. Fenton personally holds that theor

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The present purpose is not minute criticism of that theory but rutr.er to indicate the difficulties found in Dr. Fenton's viβ< and incidentally what seems discrepant with St. Thomas.

Save m rhe manner of offering, the Cross and the Mass sre tme and trie same sacrifice. The cross was offered for a3 ' so rXí ;t ri-c Ma,-. Hence the worJs of the consecration ·:; chance: Qu: pro vobis et pro multis effundetur," This mea»:; tnat all wayrarers may partic-pnte in Christ's Priesthood and sacrmcc and partake ut Christ's <acriiicial activity. They do»° °y grace and t.ut;:,. fiius persons without a baptismal charac-

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grinces. St. Thomas writes: "The just laic is united to Christ in a spiritual union through faith and charity and *not through sacramental power*; therefore he has a spiritual priesthood unto offering spiritual sacrifices of which it is said in Psalm 50 "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit," and in Rom. 12, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice;" hence also in I. Peter 2, he is called (*dicitur*): "A holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices." (Italics mine.)⁷

If the text and context of Holy Writ be consulted, it will, I think, be found that "spiritual priesthood" is attributed, not to a sacramental character, but to faith. St. Thomas includes infidels potentially in the Mystical Body* and therefore in Christ's priesthood and sacrifice. Thus the Cross and the Mass benefit all wayfarers and depute them to these sacred duties. The sacramental character does nothing more than to increase, uplift and indelibly seal this increased and uplifted "potency," » that the possessor may enter Christ's sacrificial activity and mystical life enhancedly, by means which previously were not possible, that is to say, by receiving or administering *in re* sacraments other than Baptism and by the sacramental sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist. A sacramental character is a potency. Of itself no potency to union produces union; nor of itself does any potency to act produce the act. Hence no potency, sacramental or otherwise, unites men to Christ,⁹ to Christ's Mystical Body, to Christ's sacrificial activity, nor to Christ's Redemption. Union effected by faith; and faith implies grace and a due exercise of à tee will in those who have the use of reason; white a vital union is effected by living faith. The Mystical Body, not having hypostatic union with Christ, is a separate not a conjoin inzrument of Christ. It requires grace and faith for union an action with Christ. If the Mystical Body lost grace and futh, its union and activity with Christ would cease, and it wou not then be t... Mystical Body. Faith his not only an interna o*-- fiw an external efficiency through divinely appoint means.

1 -...A5 the teaching of St. Thomas. It has alrea y n stu

⁷ 5 III. Q. 82, a. 1, 2.

³ s. in, Q. g. » 3j J
⁴ <. § III, Q. vi, g. 3(j 1. "Unij nostra Deum ew per operationes! ù
 eura cognoscimus et amamus; et id« rJis on'° est P" gratiam

1 •Hteaiem, ùS operatio perfecta procedit ab habitu."

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sense," it seems impossible that a priest could celebrate Mass without offering it for all the faithful of the Mystical Body. Why then this exhortation of Trent?

Since the priest represents Christ and Christ died for all men, it follows that in this representation the priest offers Mass in a sense for all men and that all wayfarers are benefited by every Mass. Why restrict the offering to the limits of the Mystical Body and make the priest assume the person of Christ only through the intermediary of the Mystical Body or of an organ which exists to offer the sacrifice of the Mass? This view seems replete with insuperable difficulties.

Without being able to see that he is correct, one is yet grateful

Fenton for the logical and earnest manner in which he develops his principles and thesis and for calling special attention to the sacramental character. His paper supplies much for deep and profitable thought.

St. John of the Cross seems to me the best exponent of St. Thomas on the Mystical Body. His way is the "dark way of faith" and has been approved by the Church, for it is the way shown down by St. Thomas and by the Council of Trent. His theology and metaphysics are solidly scholastic and avoid the pit-

1. Father Brosnan's objection. " His argument is subtle but is not free from ambiguity. For example, he says: ' The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ.' This is of course quite true.

But the Church consists of a ' soul ' and ' body ' It would not be correct to say that all who belong to the ' soul ' also belong to the ' body ' or vice versa. In this or in similar ambiguities seem to lie the difficulties and the weaknesses which enter his argument."

The resolution. The statement to which Father Brosnan refers could seem ambiguous only to one who considered the " soul " and the " body " as two distinct churches or groups, ω either one of which the appellation " Mystical Body of Christ" could be applied. Felder thus states the truth which -Lur the foundation of this difficulty. "Anima et corp.: ' etc es < non sunt duae ecclesiae, altera invisibili';, altera vi-ibilis. ■Y. c stituunt unam ecclesiam visibilem simul et vivam," >■ Church can be designated as the Mystical Body of C:u: ' ■ ambiguity or equivocation.

2. Fatner Brosnan's difficulty. " Whan Dr. Fentc-n ' The enduring quality which constitutes us .is membtr- er t - Church is rhe character of Baptism, difficulties at cnce arse- can hardly be maintained that the character of Baptbi" c- n* tutes us as members ->f the Church '. Many wE.i ha'c n' b tismal character. because they arc in the state f grace .?!<? t-î the soul c? me Church ana are thercforc merace:> -f :W Cnurch. Many ah<> who hive a baotimal character d» -ot long to the ' body ' nf the Church, ceH a<. heretic-. ■?..■●■■ 's' vitand: excr-mmunicati: if the-c are not in rhe sra.e of taey are in no way member- of the Church."

Tnc resolutwn. This h the tenth thesis in E:h t'-.iP· "c'< :J' Id quod prime- er principaliter reqv:r:tur at -wJs <' i'c ■,e membrum, c-t character bapti»r.-.ali-. l-que non -'ctaf-.e -' l- sed in rei veritate susceptu--. Porro rar.ta c<t v: bu.:; c? teris, ut nisi aliquo ipsius baptizat; seta haec <;> affici- ' " ' "

ïeriPer a?gnS^ hominem imitati cr-porh Vc/- -athohcie. Ideo iûi on-ne; qui usum rationis nondum .■: " -

: ' 's, j ! ' ' & l A ' ' ' Tfw0-'H 3 J.11-t *η,*41; Tjâ 'b ' .

quaecumque tandem modo et a quibuscumque sacramentum baptismatis vere acceperunt, ipso facto inter vera corporis membra numerantur".² The traditional theologians reserve the designation "member of the Church" for those who possess the character of Baptism, excluding even the catechumens. Thus Herrmann writes: "Catechumeni, etiamsi corde credant et fidem exterius profiteantur, atque legitimis pastoribus subjiçantur, inter Ecclesiae membra non sunt computandi."³

J. Father Brosnan's objection. "It does not seem correct to state, as does Dr. Fenton, that the man who has the baptismal character belongs to an organization which worships God as an instrument of Christ, nor that, 'the Thomistic teaching on the sacramental character affords us the basis for a properly dynamic concept of the Mystical Body.'"—"It is remarkable that St. Thomas does not mention 'sacramental character' in his beautiful treatment of Christ's Mystical Body in the *Summa Theologiae* in the third part, the eighth question, the third article, it is therefore very difficult to see that Dr. Fenton's statements

The resolution. To deny that the living and visible Church, the organization of which only those who possess the baptismal character are members, is an organization which worships God as an instrument of Christ is certainly to express an ecclesiology inconsistent with that of the article in question. Father Brosnan's anxiety to stress the distinction and even to separate the "body" and the "soul" of the Church have obscured in this instance his appreciation of the living and visible organization, attaining a definite end through

4. Father Brosnan's difficulty. "It is undeniable, however, that Dr. Fenton's statements fundamental."

1. J? Eccl. i. s. i. ... R; > -e. I < *, ... ia-? < t T

of Trent. Incidentally, he does not seem correctly to use the words of the Council in the following passage.—It is hard therefore, to see that Dr. Fenton gives the correct meaning of this quotation. Trent also seems to contradict Dr. Fenton's view."

The resolution. The passage at issue is that in which the words of the Council of Trent (*Session 22, Chapter 6*) were used in the article. Father Brosnan's difficulty is merely his faulty translation of the words of the Council. He reads the text in such a way as to suppose that the Fathers urge the people to communicate spiritually at Mass, and the priest to celebrate *is* a public minister, not for himself alone, but for all the faithful who *pertain to* the Body of Christ. Actually the Council approves and commends Masses at which the *priest alone* communicates sacramentally, since they are to be considered as *common*, "partly *because* the people spiritually communicate in them, and partly *because they* are celebrated by a public minister of the Church, not for himself alone, but for all the faithful who belong to the Body of Christ." A glance at the text of the Council gives sufficient evidence that every Mass is, as a matter of fact, offered for all the members of that Church, the proper and perfective act of which is this *one* Eucharistic sacrifice. I cheerfully admit that Father Brosnan's translation seems to contradict the doctrine put forward in "The Act of the Mystical Body."

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TOWARD MORE FRUITFUL PREACHING

In behalf of both Pew and Pulpit.

"THERE SEEMS to be no limit to which men will go

of means to gain an end. It was not surprising that atheistic enthusiasts for state absolutism should not scruple to try to gain American favor by their vaunted devotion to democracy. The tremendous advantage of such action during the recent war in Spain justified in their mind the means to the end. But it is surprising and we are rightly shocked when a "preacher" for the pay of a paltry publicity declaims in favor of a moratorium on preaching. If there is humor in it, it is grim, indeed. As well might an attorney advocate the outlawing of all litigation. I do not black mount his preaching-block and rant against the

These would not thereby betray a Not a barrage of Catholic editorial reaction of the New York moratorium on preaching during the summer. With but a single exception, the reaction was "vox et praeterea nihil" - it came not from those professedly interested in the Gospel, but from a few zealous members. It was upon the incident as an occasion to call attention to the fact that there was not only not a surplus of preaching, but merely an insufficiency of it, and that in the warm weather excused from the market. Outside of the market, and where announcements and school activities crowded the service, not only in summer but through-

It has come to be known, thus the "pew" dictating to the layman's sense of the dictatorship of the

the crusaders realized all this is evidenced in those reports, "The Crusade for and Hearing of the word of God." and destructively critical, the