

tery of man's deification, it cannot be made more than it is without being thereby despoiled. Raised to a formal sharing in that inner-Trinitarian life proper to Deity alone, man is not thus transformed entitatively into God. This is the prerogative of Christ alone; the blessed, too, "become" God but only in the order of knowing and loving. Anything savoring of theological pantheism or a kind of monophysitism ultimately demeans the splendor which is grace. The doctrine of Father Rahner must involve either an unthinkable fusion of God with creature, or a transformation of the creature into the divine by way of hypostatic union or glorious vision. Grace is none of these. The most disquieting feature of this theory (and its variants) is that it is impossible to see that it does not slight the transcendence of God.

Faith is at once a need to understand. The deep things of God suggest a constant dynamism (if not always objective progression) in the striving for such understanding. We should not rest satisfied with mere re-statement of the formulae which arose out of the vitality of the faith in the past. The metaphysics of grace surely can be furthered, rendered more profoundly illumined for us. But the directions which Father Rahner here suggests do seem to break continuity with the rich traditions of the past, even to come close to overstepping the norms of orthodoxy.

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THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS AS AN ACT  
OF THE VIRTUE OF RELIGION

A STUDY IN MORAL THEOLOGY

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IN recent years many theologians have shown grave dissatisfaction with the method of presenting and expounding the truth of revelation as it is found in the vast majority (if not indeed in all) of theological manuals. These theologians demand a more vital theology, a more vivid way of presenting divinely revealed truth, a manner more adapted to the mentality and training of the modern man. Such reactions are found among theological writers everywhere and it must be sincerely admitted that they are not altogether without foundation. His Holiness, Pope John XXIII, in his inaugural address to the assembled conciliar fathers, insists that there is urgent need for re-thinking our theology and for expressing it in a new and more modern way. In the same breath, however, he insists that there can be no question whatever of changing in any way the ancient truths, or of "accommodating" them to the whims and fancies of modern man. It is much more a question of presenting the ancient truths in a new garb, as it were, of freeing them from the dust of the past.<sup>1</sup> It is not, I think, out of place to quote the

<sup>1</sup> It is not the first time in the history of the Church or in the history of theological discussion that the need of a new formulation of the ancient truths of our faith has been felt, a formulation more suited to the mentality of our adversaries; it is not the first time that such a new expression of divine truth has been urgently called for. We find examples of that in almost every age. Thus we find in the 16th century a renowned theologian, Melchior Cano, who took an active part in the discussions of the Council of Trent on the Blessed Eucharist, the Sacrifice of the Mass and on the Sacrament of Penance, expressing his ideas most candidly on the question. He writes in his famous work, *De Locis Theologicis, Bk XII, chapter 11*, the following: Dixit in Concilio Tridentino vir eloquens sane ac facundus, sed parum theologus tamen, qui id suadere vellet audientibus, adversum haereticos, praesertim Lutheranos, non esse magnum usum scholasticae concertationis, oratorio potius more cum illis disserendum: nostrum enim spinosum esse ac per-

Supreme Pontiff's own words in their full context, for there is an inclination at times to cite his words out of context, and therein lies a grave danger. Here are his solemn words which set down succinctly and clearly the principles governing every theological investigation:

What is needed at the present time is a new enthusiasm, a new joy and serenity of mind in the unreserved acceptance by all of the entire Christian faith, without forfeiting that accuracy and precision in its presentation which characterized the proceedings of the Council of Trent and the first Vatican Council. What is needed, and what everyone imbued with a truly Christian, Catholic and apostolic spirit craves today, is that the doctrine shall be more widely known, more deeply understood, and more penetrating in its effects on men's moral lives. What is needed is that certain and immutable doctrine, to which the faithful owe obedience, be studied afresh and reformulated in contemporary terms. For

molestum. Quae si vera essent, exempla in Theologia disputandi non ab his, quos ante dixi, meliora peterentur. Equidem etsi non sum nescius, quam sit, non scholae dico in disputando mos, sed tota omnino scholae Theologia haereticis invisa, sed eo magis existimo, scholasticam disserendi formam ad haereses refellendas efficacior, quo magis haereticis invisa est. Quod si Lutherani academiae subtilitate minime capiuntur, ne oratione quidem ad rhetorum leges artificiose composita capi poterunt, quoniam grandiores sunt et callidiores effecti, quam ut orationis artificio apprehendantur. Verum si eo loco res sit, ut adversum Lutherana dogmata certare cogar, eligant alii (nihil enim impedio) suave orationis genus, quo mollius et familiaris homines istiusmodi ad ecclesiae benevolentiam alliciant, dummodo mihi relinquunt scholae ossa servosque ac pressam disserendi soliditatem. . . . Quum oratorum more quasi torrens fertur oratio, quamvis multa cuiusque modi rapiat, nihil tamen fere teneas, nihil apprehendas. Cum autem ad scholae normam certa via et ratione premitur, contineri amplectique facilius potest. Itaque praeclarum a Divo Thoma accepimus morem disputandi, si eum teneremus. Nemo vero a viro gravissimo orationis delicias quaerat, pigmenta muliebria, fucum puerilem, sed veras gravesque sententias, argumenta solida et propria, sermonem rei, de qua disseritur, accommodatum. . . . Equidem non Divum Thomam modo, sed scholae auctores quosdam alios existimo, si humaniores litteras coluissent, et quae in schola didicerant, eloqui voluissent, ornatissime splendidissimeque potuisse facere; et viros eloquentiae studiosos, si ab scholae instituto non abhorruissent, sed theologiam hanc didicissent et tractare voluissent, gravissime et copiosissime dicere potuisse. . . . *Verum si alterum sit optandum, malim quidem indisertam scientiam, quam inscitiam loquacem.* Nam exempla illa disputationis theologicae suis omnibus numeris absoluta is solum suppeditare potest, qui eloquentiam sapientiae coniunxerit. Age tamen, qualiacumque nostra sunt, et ea ipsi afferamus, quae etsi non meliora erunt quam vetera, erunt temporis fortassis aptiora.

this deposit of faith, or truths which are contained in our time-honored teaching, is one thing; the manner in which these truths are set forth, with their meaning preserved intact, is something else. This then, is what will require our careful, and perhaps too our patient, consideration. We must work out ways and means of expounding these truths in a manner more consistent with a predominantly pastoral view of the Church's teaching office.<sup>2</sup>

When reading much of modern theological writing one gets now and again, unfortunately, the impression that there is an urge to change not only the manner of expressing ancient truths but even of modifying the 'depositum' itself. It is not surprising that the effect of such writing should be felt amongst the young theologians pursuing their theological studies. These frequently show a great lack of sympathy for traditional methods and demand from their professors a more vital, a more *existential* approach to revealed truth. This is true both in the field of dogmatic theology and in that of moral theology. In the domain of moral theology there is a certain amount of confusion of thought in the writings of the moralists themselves and then, of necessity, in the minds of the students. The net result is that the students fail to distinguish between what we may call moral catechesis, that is, simple instruction in the rules governing Christian living as found in the sources of revelation, and formal theological science, which deals with the reality of the supernatural Christian life and strives to expound and analyze scientifically its principles, its structure and its functioning. What the young theologians most often ask for and welcome in this field is a kind of biblical moral theology, which is more immediately applicable in the work of the sacred ministry—preaching and confessional. The reaction here is seen to be double: on the one side, against the casuistical moral teaching of the moral manuals (which most unfortunately reduce all moral theology as such to a science of sin) and on the other side against the speculative moral teaching of St. Thomas and the scholastics.

<sup>2</sup> AAS 1962, p. 791-792.

A very clear example of reaction against the method of the manuals is to be found in the matter of sacramental theology and in this case we are forced to admit that the reaction is most justified indeed. Prof. K. Rahner, for instance, laments the fact that, with the sole exception of the Sacrament of Penance (in which there is an insistence on the acts of the penitent receiving it) "all the sacraments are monotonously discussed according to one and the same pattern" (necessity, institution, structure, that is, matter and form) while "the existential side of the sacrament is given no place by right."<sup>3</sup> In this we agree with him whole-heartedly. Some time ago I had occasion to insist precisely on this point in the context of a series of articles on the role of the sacraments in the Christian life.<sup>4</sup> There I pointed out that the sacraments as used or received by the Christian people pertain to the virtue of religion: they are *external* religious acts. The two fundamental religious movements of the soul are the *movement of giving* to God an oblation of self or our possessions (corresponding to the internal attitude of devotion or devotedness to God, our Creator), and the *movement of receiving from God as supplicants* in humble dependence (corresponding to the internal attitude of prayer or supplication). In our sacramental life we find these very same acts of worship flowing from the Christian and supernatural or infused virtue of religion: the giving to God through Christ, our High Priest and Mediator between us and God the Father, and the receiving of divine life through Christ's sacraments in a spirit of religious submission and deep humility.

In this present article I should like to set down some reflections on the existential character of the greatest of all the external acts of Christian worship, the sacrifice of the Mass. These thoughts have been suggested not so much by a dogmatic study of the sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist as by

<sup>3</sup> Karl Rahner, S. J., *Theological Investigations*, I, p. 18, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Doctrine and Life* (Dominican Publications, Dublin, Ireland) 12 (1962) 71-78, 128-187.

a close study of the notion of sacrifice in so far as it is an external act of the virtue of religion, to be placed by all those who either offer or take part in the sacrifice of Christ. And in this I think I am correct in maintaining that I am emphasizing the so-called existential character of the Mass and the vital role it should play in the life of every Christian.<sup>5</sup>

The 22nd Session of the Council of Trent was devoted to the Church's teaching on the sacrifice of the Mass. As it is the most solemn and completely authentic statement we possess on the matter I think it well to quote it in full—in spite of its length—before proposing my theological reflections on its true meaning in the Christian life.

The holy, ecumenical, and general Synod of Trent lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit with the same legates of the Apostolic See presiding, has decreed that the faith and doctrine concerning the great mystery of the Eucharist in the holy Catholic Church, complete and perfect in every way, should be retained and, after the errors and heresies have been repudiated, should be preserved as of old in its purity; concerning this doctrine, since it is the true and the only sacrifice, the holy Council, instructed by the light of the Holy Spirit, teaches these matters which follow, and declares that they be preached to the faithful.

Since under the former Testament (as the apostle Paul bears witness) there was no consummation because of the weakness of the Levitical priesthood, it was necessary (God the Father of mer-

<sup>5</sup> The literature on the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist in general and on the Sacrifice of the Mass in particular is immense. However, I should like to quote the following works that have been of special help in the working out of the present essay. Bernhard Durst, O.S.B., "Das Wesen der Eucharistiefeier und des christlichen Priestertums," Herder: Rome, 1953 (*Studia Anselmiana* 32); Charles Journet, *La Messe, Présence du sacrifice de la Croix*, Desclée de Brouwer, 1957; Antonio Piolanti, *Il mistero Eucaristico*, Libreria editrice Fiorentina: Florence, 1958; Anton Vorbichler, S. V. D., *Das Opfer auf den uns heute noch erreichbaren ältesten Stufen der Menschheitsgeschichte*. Eine Begriffsstudie, St. Gabriel-Verlag, Mödling b. Wien, 1956; Ansgar Vonier, O.S.B., *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, London, 1925) (still one of the best studies on the matter); and the special number of the French review *Lumière et Vie* 7 (1952).

It is of interest to note that Melchior Cano in chapter 12 of Book 12 of the above-mentioned and quoted work, *De Locis Theologicis*, gives a most penetrating theological analysis of the Catholic doctrine on the Blessed Eucharist both as Sacrament and as Sacrifice.

cies ordaining it thus) that another priest according to the order of Melchisedech [Gen. 14:18, Ps. 109:4; Heb. 7:11] arise, our Lord Jesus Christ, who could perfect [Heb. 10:14] all who were to be sanctified, and lead them to perfection. He, therefore, our God and Lord, though He was about to offer Himself once to God the Father upon the altar of the Cross by the mediation of death, so that He might accomplish an eternal redemption for them [edd.: *illic*, there], nevertheless, that His sacerdotal office might not come to an end with His death [Heb. 7:24, 27] at the Last Supper, on the night He was betrayed, so that He might leave to His beloved spouse the Church a visible sacrifice (as the nature of man demands), whereby that bloody sacrifice once to be completed on the Cross might be represented, and the memory of it remain even to the end of the world [I Cor. 11:23 ff] and its saving grace be applied to the remission of those sins which we daily commit, declaring Himself constituted "a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" [Ps. 109:4], offered to God the Father His own body and the blood under the species of bread and wine, and under the symbols of those same things gave to the apostles (whom He then constituted priests of the New Testament), so that they might partake, and He commanded them and their successors in the priesthood in these words to make offering: "Do this in commemoration of me, etc." [Luke 22:19; I. Cor. 11:24], as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught. For, after He had celebrated the ancient feast of the Passover, which the multitude of the children of Israel sacrificed [Exod. 12:1 ff.] in memory of their exodus from Egypt, He instituted a new Passover, Himself to be immolated under visible signs by the Church through the priests, in memory of His own passage from this world to the Father, when by the shedding of His blood He redeemed us and "delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into His kingdom" [Col. 1:13].

And this, indeed, is that "clean oblation" which cannot be defiled by any unworthiness or malice on the part of those who offer it; which the Lord foretold through Malachias must be offered in every place as a clean oblation [Mal. 1:11] to His name, which would be great among the gentiles, and which the apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians has clearly indicated, when he says that they who are defiled by participation of the "table of the devils" cannot become partakers of the table of the Lord [I Cor. 10:21], understanding by table in each case, the altar. It is finally that [sacrifice] which was prefigured by various types of sacrifices, in the period of nature and the Law [Gen. 4:4; 8:20; 12:8; 22; Ex. pas-

sim], inasmuch as it comprises all good things signified by them, as being the consummation and perfection of them all.

And since in this divine sacrifice, which is celebrated in the Mass, that same Christ is contained and immolated in an unbloody manner, who on the altar of the Cross "once offered Himself" in a bloody manner [Heb. 9:27], the holy Synod teaches that this is truly propitiatory, and has this effect, that if contrite and penitent we approach God with a sincere heart and right faith, with fear and reverence, "we obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid" [Heb. 4:16]. For, appeased by this oblation, the Lord, granting grace and gift of penitence, pardons crimes and even great sins. For, it is one and the same Victim, the same one now offering by the ministry of the priests as He who then offered Himself on the Cross, the manner of offering alone being different. The fruits of that oblation (bloody, that is) are received most abundantly through this unbloody one; so far is the latter from being derogatory in any way to Him. Therefore, it is offered rightly according to the tradition of the apostles, not only for the sins of the faithful living, for their punishments and other necessities, but also for the dead in Christ not yet fully purged. (Denz. 937a-940, trans. R. J. Deferrari).<sup>6</sup>

Such is the Church's official and authentic teaching on the Mass. Every explanation of the Mass, either as a sacrament or as a sacrifice, must take these decisions of the Council of Trent into account and never depart from them. According to this teaching the Mass is: 1) first of all, a real and proper sacrifice; 2) secondly, the same sacrifice as that of Calvary and the Supper Room; 3) differing from Calvary only in the manner of offering the same victim; 4) and fourthly, the only sacrifice of the New Law.

The Mass, then, is a real sacrifice, the only real one of the New Law. That being so, it follows that what is true of sacrifice as such must be true also of the Mass, and what is true of priesthood as such must be true too of our Christian priesthood; and before we can determine how the Christian people should best take part in the sacrifice of the Mass and through it in that of Christ on Calvary, we must first of all under-

<sup>6</sup>In the latest, fully revised edition of Denzinger's *Enchiridion* this text is to be found n<sup>o</sup> 1738-1743 (Herder: Barcelona 1963).

stand how sacrifice is offered and how one offers or takes part in it. That is the only sound manner of procedure in a theological analysis of the Mass as a sacrifice (and this aspect takes precedence over it as a sacrament) and of the part the faithful should play in the offering of it. Sacrifice is essentially an *external* act of the virtue of religion, and as such it is the sign of an internal sacrifice, of some internal act or attitude of mind of the person who offers it, and in the persons for whom it is offered or in whose name it is offered. This internal sacrifice is nothing else than what theologians call "*devotio*" or devotedness. This is defined by St. Thomas as "a ready will to do what pertains to the service of God."<sup>7</sup> It is the principal *internal* act of the virtue of religion and is an act of submission to God and to God's will in everything. It is a readiness to do God's will no matter what it may be and no matter how it may be made known to us. This complete submission of the creature to God is called by St. Thomas the "interior spiritual sacrifice"; it is the interior spiritual giving or oblation of self. A sacrifice which is offered exteriorly signifies an interior spiritual sacrifice by which the soul offers itself to God.<sup>8</sup> When man submits himself wholly to God he is drawn to manifest this submission in a sensible, tangible way. His nature tells him to offer something to God as a sign of his interior readiness to submit to God in all things.<sup>9</sup> In other words, nature, or better natural reason, tells him to offer some kind of external sacrifice. Now this external sacrifice, which consists essentially in the giving of something to God in a sensible and visible way, in relinquishing ownership of something, presupposes an internal act of giving, an internal "*oblatio*," quite distinct from "*devotio*," while flowing from it and being informed by it. This internal oblation bears directly on the object to be sacrificed, that is, on the object which is to be given over to God. If the external thing to be offered should be oneself (as in the case of self-sacrifice) then this internal oblation could rightly be called an act of self-

<sup>7</sup> II-II, 82, 1.<sup>8</sup> II-II, 85, 2.<sup>9</sup> II-II, 85, 1.

oblation, and it would be altogether distinct from the act of devotion "*quo anima seipsam offert Deo*."

Now Christ's sacrifice on Calvary was, in fact, a sacrifice of self, demanded of Him by His Eternal Father for the redemption of sinning mankind. In offering this sacrifice Christ elicited an internal act of self-oblation and carried it into effect by allowing himself to be killed by the Jews. In the Old Law God demanded the killing of an animal, for instance, as a sacrifice (this being the most expressive manner of relinquishing ownership of a living thing and of giving it over to God), that is, an external sign of the people's subjection to and dependence upon Him. In offering this sacrifice the priest of the Old Law, already conscious of his and the people's dependence upon God, had to elicit a special act of giving this thing to God. This internal act, moving to the external action, is essential to sacrifice. Both together make up one complete external human act, the act of sacrifice. In speaking of sacrifice, then, we must be careful to distinguish three elements or acts. 1) First, the act or attitude of "*devotio*," which, as we saw, is a readiness to submit to God in all things, the fundamental act of the religious man, and is signified here by some external action of giving. It is the "*interius spirituale sacrificium*," or the "*principale*"<sup>10</sup> or "*verum*"<sup>11</sup> *sacrificium*" of which St. Thomas so often speaks. 2) Secondly, there is the internal act of the mind by which the priest relinquishes ownership of some external object and thus gives it over to God, consecrates it or makes it sacred. This is the internal oblation and is an act of the practical intellect.<sup>12</sup> 3) Thirdly, there is the external effective giving of the object to be sacrificed. This is, in the most formal sense of the term, sacrifice: the external carrying into effect of the internal oblation. It is clear that without "*devotio*" sacrifice can have no meaning, since it would then be an empty sign, a sign without anything being

<sup>10</sup> II-II, 85, 3 ad 2.<sup>11</sup> *Summa contra Gentiles*, III, 120.<sup>12</sup> Cf. I-II, 102, 3 for the meaning of the different types of sacrifice in the Old Law.

signified. It is clear, too, that the external effective giving or sacrifice necessarily presupposes the internal oblation just as every other external human act presupposes an internal act of the human will, without which the external action would not even be a human act.

Since the Blessed Eucharist is both a sacrament and a sacrifice we may note here the two main differences between a sacrament and a sacrifice. 1) Since sacrifice is essentially the giving of something to God as a sign of our submission it follows that men could institute their own sacrifices, external signs of their recognition of God's supreme dominion. But a sacrament is a sign and the cause of some gift given by God to man. Therefore, only God, from whom the gift comes, can institute a sacrament.<sup>13</sup> 2) A sacrament of the New Law, instituted by Christ, will, of itself (*ex opere operato*), produce or increase grace, provided no obstacle be placed in its way (*non ponentibus obicem*), that is, provided the recipient in receiving it really places an act of the virtue of religion. Sacrifice, however, of itself, produces no effect, either in the priest or the assistant unless it be ratified interiorly by them. That is, it produces its effects according to the devotion and faith of the offerer, of which devotion and faith it is a sign. Sacrifice is ordained immediately to honouring and placating God as St. Thomas has shown.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it is the interior or moral ratification of the external sacrifice that makes the sacrifice acceptable to God. It is what reconciles me to God. What good is it for a person to intercede for me with another person, whom I have offended, unless I sincerely desire to be reconciled to that person, unless I really desire to make amends for the injury done? We may, of course, deceive our fellowmen, but God we cannot deceive: *Deus intuetur cor*.<sup>15</sup>

In the state of pure nature (that is, had man never been

<sup>13</sup> Cf. II-II, 85, 1 ad 3; III, 64, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Est enim hoc proprie sacrificii effectus ut per ipsum placetur Deus: sicut etiam homo offensam in se commissam remittit propter aliquod obsequium acceptum, quod ei exhibetur. III, 49, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. III, 83, 4 ad 8.

raised to the supernatural order and had he never sinned) each individual would have been drawn to offer some kind of sacrifice on his own behalf. That is, he would have certainly testified in some tangible and sensible way to the fact that he owed his being and all he had to God, the Creator and sovereign Lord of all. Or, perhaps, he would have deputed others to do it for him, guaranteeing that he would ratify what they did. In this way there would have been instituted a kind of natural priesthood, the deputy (that is, the priest) acting as representative of all the rest in testifying openly and externally to the submission of all. St. Thomas thinks that the honour and dignity of offering sacrifice would have been committed to the first-born of each family.<sup>16</sup> One thing is certain, as experts in the history of religions show, the sacerdotal function has, in fact, always been a social function, the priest acting in the name of many, of the family, of the tribe, of the people. In this state of pure nature, then, man would have decided upon his own sacrifices—their kind, the manner of offering them, etc. But, obviously, the Creator could intervene, should He think fit to do so, and ordain that only such and such sacrifices would be acceptable to Him. He, as Lord and Master of all creation, has the perfect right to do that. And, in fact, in revealed religion, in the Old Law, God (Jahweh) ordained explicitly that certain men (Aaron and his sons) should offer sacrifice to Him on their own behalf and on behalf of the whole Jewish people. They were the priests constituted by Him, His priests. They were thus constituted the mediators between God and the people. God laid down in all detail what precise kind of sacrifices were to be offered. In consequence no others would be acceptable to Him, no others would be regarded as signifying the submission of the people, no others would, in fact, placate Him. The exact ritual of all these sacrifices was also laid down by God, and these ceremonies had to be observed in every detail.

The purpose of all sacrifice as such (which we can deter-

<sup>16</sup> Cf. I-II, 103, 1 ad 1 et 3; II-II, 85, 1 ad 1.

mine from a simple analysis of the nature of sacrifice) is fourfold. 1) First, to give honour and glory and praise to the Creator as the Lord of all being. By sacrifice we wish to show that we are conscious of our complete dependence upon God. This is called by theologians the "*finis latreuticus*" of sacrifice. 2) Secondly, to thank the Creator for His goodness to us in creating us<sup>17</sup> (that is, in giving us a sharing in His Being and perfections) and in conserving us in being. This is known to theologians as the "*finis eucharisticus*" of sacrifice. 3) Thirdly, to implore the Creator never to forsake us, never to withdraw His aid from us, to beseech Him to continue to look with favour and benevolence upon us. This is called the "*finis impetratorius*" of sacrifice. 4) Fourthly and lastly, in the event of our having in any way offended the Creator, to make amends for the injury done and to regain the good-will of God. In other words to placate His anger. This is termed the "*finis satisfactorius* or *propitiatorius*" of sacrifice. The first three ends are essential to all and every sacrifice, even to those that would be offered to God in the state of pure nature or in the state of original justice. The fourth is present only when sacrifice is offered by or on behalf of *sinning* creatures.<sup>18</sup>

In the Old Law the people really took part in the sacrifices in so far as they were present at the actual offering in the temple. They thus ratified what the priest did in their stead, while calling forth in their own souls a spirit of submission (the actualization of the religious attitude of which we spoke above) to the will of God. This ratification by the people in the Old Law was obviously a *moral* ratification. They took no physical part in the actual sacrificial offering, but did share in the sacrificial meal as symbolic of sharing in the divine blessing brought on the people by the sacrifice offered.<sup>19</sup> Of

<sup>17</sup> St. Thomas often refers to the divine gift of creation for which we must be ever thankful to the Creator. Cf. II-II, 85; *Summa contra Gentiles*, II, 120.

<sup>18</sup> The whole question of the fourfold purpose or value (Wert) of sacrifice is brought out extremely well by Bernhard Durst in his work mentioned above in note 5.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. A. Grail, O. P. in his article, "Le Messe, Sacrament de la Croix, *Lumière*

this submission of the people the external action (external sacrifice) of the priest was a sign, just as much as it was a sign of the priest's own internal submission. Indeed this internal submission (either actualized, or as a state or attitude of mind and soul vis-à-vis of the Creator) is the very soul of sacrifice. Without it, as we saw above, the external action of offering some sensible object to God becomes an empty formula, devoid of meaning because signifying nothing. In that sense, and in that sense only, is the internal sacrifice the "*principale sacrificium*" or the "*verum sacrificium*" and not in the sense that it is the formal constitutive element. It gives meaning to the external rite of sacrifice.

The faithful Jew, assisting in the temple, so associated himself with the sacrifice of the High Priest as to make it his own and apply its fruits to himself personally. He could really and truly say that he personally offered sacrifice, because he offered together with the priest, but subordinated to him. They both offered the same sacrifice, one and the same, numerically identical. There was only one external rite (and that is formally what sacrifice is as an external act of religion), but there were many internal acts of submission to God signified by that one external action. The multiplicity of the internal acts signified does not multiply the sacrifice numerically. This point is of some importance when we come to consider the sacrifice of the Mass in the New Law.<sup>20</sup>

*et Vie* 7 (1952) p. 25. The same notion is expressed most clearly in the Canon of the Mass in the prayer "Supplices Te Rogamus" after the consecration. It should, however, be remarked that the faithful in the Old Law did not *always* partake of the sacrificial offerings. Such a participation was excluded altogether from the greatest of the Old Testament sacrifices, from the "holocausts." St. Thomas indicates these differences explicitly in his tract on the ceremonial rites of the Old Law (cf. I-II, 102, 3 ad 8) and his teaching is corroborated by modern Old Testament scholars. St. Thomas' theological exposé (I-II, qq. 101-103) of the Old Testament ceremonial law would well repay a careful study.

<sup>20</sup> We shall see that, at Mass, the priest and the faithful unite themselves to Christ, the one High Priest of the New Law, offering Himself in Sacrifice to His Father, in much the same way as the faithful Jew united himself to the priest offering sacrifice in the temple. I say that even with respect to the priests of the New Law: they stand in much the same relation to Christ as the faithful Jew did

In the Old Law the priest offered sacrifice as a principal agent. He was priest in his own right. He was a priest *sui iuris*, that is, not sharing in the priesthood of another (Christ), but just prefiguring Christ's priesthood. He was a priest chosen from among the people by God. In his own right he offered the wine or animal or whatever other object was to be offered. He observed all the prescribed rites in doing so. The people simply ratified what he did. All these sacrifices were obviously of a very finite and limited character. They could in no way give to God all the honour and glory that is His due; alone he could never hope to satisfy for the sins of all men, sins which took on an infinite malice because they offended an infinite being.

When human nature turned away from God by the sin of Adam God demanded full and complete satisfaction. This we know from revelation. There infinite satisfaction was asked for by God. Though this may seem harsh treatment of a poor finite creature by an All-powerful and infinite Creator, it was in fact much more a sign of how much God thought of us. Instead of despising us and our sins (or even of annihilating us) He thought it worthwhile (if I may say so without any irreverence) to make us pay the last cent of our debt to Him. He considered our self-respect.<sup>21</sup>

But how was this full satisfaction to be paid? Only a God could have found a means; a means, which in carrying out the designs of His inexorable justice, was to show forth in a resplendent way His boundless love for His creature, man. *Deus, qui humanae substantiae dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti et mirabilius reformasti . . .*<sup>22</sup> God decreed that His Only-begotten Son, His Word, in Whom and by Whom and through Whom all things (and all men) were made, should take to Himself a human nature, and in that human nature

to the priest. This in no way derogates from the special dignity of the Christian priesthood or from its pre-eminence over the priesthood of the Old Law. I hope to show that later.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. III, 46, 1 ad 3; 47, 3 ad 1.

<sup>22</sup> Prayer at the Offertory of the Mass in the Roman Rite.

(as man) offer the sacrifice of His life in satisfaction for the sins of men to His Eternal Father. The fittingness, or as St. Thomas and other theologians say, the *convenientia*, of this divine plan has often been pointed out. Let it be said, however, that the Word of God, the Logos, is not only the substantial image that God forms of Himself, but is also the image or plan in the mind of the divine Architect of all things made by Him. The Word of God is the living idea of every man, of human nature and all its members, in the mind of God. Man by sin destroyed that plan. It was fitting (*conveniens*, in keeping with the wisdom and goodness of God), then, that all should be put right again by the incarnation of that divine image or idea of us all. Also, since the Word of God is, in that sense, the image of every creature, the Word made flesh could become the real (but mystical) head of a regenerated human nature, just as Adam, by the mere fact of being the *first* man was the physical head of all men.

Having become man the Word of God offered on Mount Calvary the sacrifice of His life to His Eternal Father for *our* salvation. He offered sacrifice in the name of us all, for us all. As a sacrifice, demanded and arranged in every detail by God in His eternal and inscrutable decrees, it gave infinite homage to God; it made infinite amends to His offended majesty; it is infinitely impetratory for us; and it is an infinite act of thanksgiving for the benefits given to all mankind. It was the act of God-Man and, since all actions are the actions of persons, it was the act of a divine Person, and consequently of infinite value. It gave more glory to God and was more acceptable and pleasing to Him than ever was sin, even the greatest, detestable. About 200 years before the Council of Trent the English mystic, Julian of Norwich, penned the following beautiful page:

I stood beholding things general, troublously and mourning, saying to our Lord in my meaning with full great dread: Ah! good Lord, how might all be well, for the great hurt that is come, by sin, to the creature? And here I desired as far as I durst, to have some more open declaring wherewith I might be eased in this mat-



ter. And to this our blessed Lord answered full meekly and with full lovely cheer, and shewed that Adam's sin was the most harm that ever was done, or ever shall be, to the world's end; and also He shewed that this (sin) is openly known in all Holy Church on earth. Furthermore He taught that I should behold the glorious Satisfaction: for this Amends making is more pleasing to God and more worshipful, without comparison, than ever was the sin of Adam harmful. Then signifieth our blessed Lord thus in this teaching, that we should take heed to this: for since I have made well the most harm, then it is my will that thou know thereby that I shall make well all that is less.<sup>23</sup>

What good can we draw from Christ's infinite merits? We were not present at Calvary to ratify what He did for us. How can I make His merits mine? How can I make His sacrifice—of honour, praise, thanksgiving, impetration and satisfaction—mine? Seeing that the merits of Calvary are infinite, there is obviously no need for another and different sacrifice. The sacrifices of the Old Law were of finite value. They were many and repeated. In the New Law any sacrifice besides the sacrifice of Calvary would lack a *raison d'être*. There must be some way in which that which Christ did on Calvary may benefit *me*, may be *my* satisfaction, *my* prayer, *my* thanks, and *my* submission. Well, we make that work of redemption ours through the Mass. Let us see how.

In the Old Law the people derived fruits from the sacrifices offered by ratifying them interiorly, by uniting themselves in interior acts of submission (which include honour, praise, thanks, expiation) to the offerer or priest. How can we unite ourselves interiorly to an act of sacrifice which took place some 2000 years ago? Let it be said right away that we could have ratified (and indeed still can do so) the sacrifice of Calvary in faith, through faith. We could thus ratify and take part in Christ's sacrifice on Calvary morally and reap its fruits interiorly. But God did not wish it to be so intangible. He wished to leave us a means of doing that much more in conformity

<sup>23</sup> Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, chap. 29, edit. Grace War-rack, p. 60.

with human nature. He wished to leave us a visible sacrifice which should be a sacrament of Calvary and through which we can make present again the sacrifice of Christ and really take part in it, offer it with Christ and apply its merits to ourselves. And this is how: Christ, by His very constitution as God-Man, sent by God the Father to redeem mankind, is essentially Priest and Mediator. As head of His Mystical Body He never ceases to offer Himself for us. "He continueth forever, hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby he is able to save forever them that come to God by him: always living to make intercession for us."<sup>24</sup> His act of oblation (self-oblation) is a permanent one in His mind and will. The following should be noted with reference to Christ's sacrifice. a) From the first moment of His existence as man there was "*devotio*" in the mind of Christ. He was always completely subject to the will of His Father. b) There was always in His mind, too, the will to offer sacrifice, the sacrifice demanded by His Father. But this sacrifice was to be offered in certain determined circumstances, in a certain place and at a certain time: on the cross at Calvary. c) The sacrifice demanded from Him by His Father was the sacrifice of His life, the sacrifice of Himself, for the salvation of mankind. That was His Father's will and Our Lord always gladly accepted it. At the Last Supper Our Lord elicited the *internal* act of self-oblation as bearing on the external giving of Himself to death on the morrow as a sacrificial act. His hour had come and He decided to permit the Jews to take and kill Him. He went to death freely; He accepted the death on the cross as the sacrifice demanded by His Father. This internal act of self-oblation was never withdrawn and did not have to be repeated. Once elicited by Christ it ever remains in His mind and was present actually (virtually!)<sup>25</sup> on Calvary, where it was carried into effect *modo cruento et absoluto*. d) At the Last Supper Our Lord externalized the inter-

<sup>24</sup> Hebr. 7: 24-25.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Cajetan in I-II, 8, 3; II-II, 24, 10, edit. Leon. n<sup>o</sup> IV; and Ferrariensis in III C 110.

nal act of self-oblation in another way, in a sacramental or symbolic way. That is, he expressed sacramentally (i.e., in a visible, sensible sign) the effective offering of His life, of Himself, in death. He instituted the sacrament of His passion and death. He really offered Himself externally, but sacramentally, to His Father. He said the first Mass. And in the words of St. Peter Canisius:

The sacrifice of the Mass rightly understood is a holy and living representation of the Lord's passion and of that bloody sacrifice which was offered for us on the Cross, and at the same time an unbloody and efficacious oblation (sacrifice).<sup>26</sup>

Our Lord's internal act of self-oblation is thus externalized sacrificially in two ways: 1) In an absolute and bloody manner on the cross. And this sacrifice on the cross may be called the *absolute* sacrifice of Christ. It was the sacrifice demanded by the eternal decree of His Father in heaven. 2) In a manner (external and accessory) which signifies and represents the absolute manner of offering Himself on the cross; that is, in a sacramental way. But this is no mere commemoration or mere figure or representation of the death on the cross. It is itself also a sacrifice in so far as it really contains Christ the victim offered for us. This is the manner of offering in the Last Supper, and consequently in the Mass.

At the Last Supper He changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood—a fore-presentation of Calvary. In so doing He rendered Himself really present under the species of bread and wine, He who was to offer Himself the next day for many unto the remission of sins. The act of *self-oblation* (His Father demanded and decreed that He offer Himself in sacrifice) in his mind (that is, the complete interior submission, the "*principale sacrificium*" of which we spoke above) never

<sup>26</sup> Peter Canisius, *Summa Doctrinae Christianae*, de sacramento Eucharistiae, § VII (edi. Landischuti 1848, p. 95): Missae sacrificium, si rem omnem aequè perpendimus, est revera dominicae passionis, et illius cruenti sacrificii, quod in cruce pro nobis est oblatum, sancta quaedam et viva representatio, atque simul incruenta et efficax oblatio.

changes.<sup>27</sup> He came to do the will of His Father. He was always about His Father's business. The external sacrificial expression of the spirit of submission (and of our submission in and through Him) was made on Calvary in a bloody manner—*modo cruento*. In the Supper Room, the same spirit of submission was represented, or better, fore-presented, in a sacramental, mystical, unbloody, but for all that sensible and visible way—*modo incruento*. He offered Himself just as truly in the Supper Room as He did on Calvary, but in a different manner. The Last Supper was indeed a true sacrifice, offered in a sensible, visible and sacramental way by Christ Himself directly and immediately. It was the very same sacrifice as that of Calvary, it was the offering of Christ Himself by Himself in a visible external way. This act of offering His Body and Blood was an act of His practical human intellect. It was what is called His oblation act. He put this act of giving of self into effect by placing the external signs of death, of His own death, which was to take place the following day. By death a *living* being is given sacrificially to God in the most expressive way possible. These external signs were placed *by His divine power*, by transubstantiation. Transubstantiation itself is not sacrifice.<sup>28</sup> It is external to it. It pertains here

<sup>27</sup> On the permanence of Christ's act of self-oblation and of the possibility of our sharing in it St. Thomas has the following to say: Omnia illa verba quae important comparisonem Judaeorum ad Christum et poenam Christi, non dicuntur fieri quotidie. Non enim dicimus quod Christus quotidie crucifigatur et occidatur, quia actus Judaeorum et poena Christi transit. Illa autem quae important comparisonem Christi ad Deum Patrem, dicuntur quotidie fieri, sicut offerre, sacrificare et huiusmodi, eo quod hostia illa perpetua est. Et hoc modo est semel oblata per Christum, quod quotidie etiam per membra ipsius offerri possit. (*II Sent.*, dist. 12, exposit. textus, ed. Moos n° 267).

<sup>28</sup> In this connection it must be remembered that the external signs (which pertain to the very essence of sacrifice as an external act of religion) of internal sacrifice were not placed by Christ Himself. But Christ willed that they be placed, that is, he voluntarily allowed Himself to be crucified by the Jews. What the Jews did was not sacrifice and in no way enters into the intrinsic constitution of Christ's sacrifice. And for all that it must be said that Christ's sacrifice consists of the following essential constitutive elements: a) His voluntary dying on the cross, a death willed by Him and ordained by His eternal Father; 2) His internal act of self-oblation in obedience to the will of His Father. —At Mass (and at the Last

only to the mode of sacrifice. But the person Christ transubstantiated in order to offer mystically, really and physically, His human sacrifice. Christ, as Man, offered Himself internally by an internal act of self-oblation. The same person, Christ, as God, implemented this internal offering externally, by His divine power in transubstantiation. This divine power of Christ was brought into play by Christ uniquely in order to externalize His internal oblation of self. It is absolutely inseparable from His act of oblation. Where transubstantiation takes place there also must be Christ's will to sacrifice and Christ's internal oblation act.

Christ offered Himself in the Supper Room, not in order to complete the sacrifice of Calvary, but, as the Council of Trent says, in order to leave His beloved spouse, the Church, a visible sacrifice, as the nature of man demands.<sup>29</sup> In the Last Supper, then, Our Lord really offers Himself to God the Father in an external visible manner, as laid down by God. It is a sacramental way, and it draws all its meaning from the fact that He was to lay down His life in external, physical, natural death on Good Friday. The external sacramental giving or offering of Himself in the Supper Room is essentially a sign of His offering of Himself in natural death on the cross. But since the elements of the eucharistic sacrifice of the Last Supper really and truly contain (by transubstantiation) the Victim to be offered in a bloody manner on the cross the separation of body and blood being signified (as separated from one another) by the double consecration, it follows that the Last Supper is no *mere* sign or symbolic fore-presentation of Calvary: it *is* Calvary (that is, the real and external oblation of His own Body and Blood to the Eternal

Supper), Christ's internal will to sacrifice and his oblation act were also externalized in external oblation in so far as, as man, He willed freely the signs symbolic of death as placed by God, by God's divine power either directly and immediately (as at the Last Supper) or indirectly and mediately through the ministry of priests (as at Mass). Here right along the line there is subordination of Christ's human will to the will and power of His Father, who determines in detail the sacrifice He desires from His creatures and the mode of offering it.

<sup>29</sup> Denz. 938.

Father by our Lord Jesus Christ). In other words, the Last Supper is an *efficacious* sign of the cross, just as all the other sacraments of the New Law not only signify grace, but also cause it effectively.

To say that the Mass is a sign of and contains Calvary is another way of saying that the Mass is a sacramental sacrifice. The sacraments of the New Law not only signify but also cause and contain what they signify. In this connection St. Thomas writes:

The sacrifice of the New Law, i.e., of the Eucharist contains Christ Himself, who is the author of sanctification . . . And so this sacrifice is also a sacrament.<sup>30</sup>

If we compare the two, the Mass and Calvary, we see that what was essential in the sacrifice of Christ is to be found identically in both. In the sacrifice of Calvary we find the following: 1) Our Lord offers Himself, Body and Blood, to His Father. He did that sacrificially, that is, externally, as a sign of His internal sacrifice, of His *devotio* and of His internal act of self-oblation in accordance with the will of His Father. Therein is to be found the very essence of His sacrifice, the supreme act of the virtue of religion in the soul of Christ. 2) Secondly, He offered Himself in the manner (mode of sacrifice) laid down by His Eternal Father, to whom He offered the sacrifice of His life. That is, He offered Himself on Calvary by dying a violent death, by allowing Himself to be killed by the Jews. In the sacrifice of the Mass, on the other hand, we find the following: 1) Christ actually offers Himself, Body and Blood, to His Father. This He does externally and sacrificially. This is again the essence of Christ's sacrifice, and it is seen to be identical with the sacrifice of Calvary and also with that of the Last Supper. 2) Secondly, He offers Himself in the manner laid down by God. That is, He offers Himself in sensible signs, under the species of bread and wine. This pertains to the accidental mode of offering sacrifice. And *this mode of offering is essentially representative of the mode of*

<sup>30</sup> I-II, 101, 4 ad 2.

offering on Calvary and only as such is it sacrificial.<sup>31</sup> Hence there is a double consecration in order to symbolize the separation of the Blood from the Body which really took place on Calvary. These are the external signs symbolic of death, of which Pope Pius XII speaks in the encyclical *Mediator Dei*. As Christ offered Himself on Calvary so is He still offering Himself daily on our altars at Mass, but in a different manner, in an external manner, in a sacramental manner.

In the encyclical *Mediator Dei* we read:

Christ our Lord, "priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech," "loved his own that were in the world"; and accordingly, at the Last Supper, on the night on which He was betrayed, He willed to leave to His beloved Bride the Church a visible sacrifice such as the nature of man requires; one by which the bloody sacrifice which was to be enacted once on the Cross should be represented and its memory remain until the end of the world, and its salutary power be applied for the remission of the sins that are daily committed by us. He therefore offered His Body and Blood to God the Father under the appearances of bread and wine, and under the symbols of the same delivered them to be taken by the Apostles; and to them and to their successors in the priesthood He gave command to offer. The august Sacrifice of the altar is therefore no mere simple commemoration of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ: it is truly and properly the offering of a sacrifice, wherein by an unbloody immolation the High Priest does what He had already done on the Cross, offering Himself to the eternal Father as a most acceptable victim. "One . . . and the same is the victim, one and the same is He who now offers by the ministry of His priests and who then offered Himself on the Cross; the difference is only in the manner of offering."<sup>32</sup>

It is sometimes said that the Mass is a *relative* sacrifice merely. If that be the case I cannot see how it can be any

<sup>31</sup> In this connection two penetrating and profound texts of Cardinal Cajetan could with profit be read. They are: 1) Chapter 9 of his opusculum *De erroribus contingentibus in Eucharistiae Sacramento*, the title of the chapter being: *Quomodo Eucharistiae sacramentum sit sacrificium et in Missa offerri sit institutum a Christo vel ab Apostolis*. 2) The second is chapter 6 of his opusculum *De Missae sacrificio et ritu adversum Lutheranos*.

<sup>32</sup> Encyl. *Mediator Dei*, Engl. trans. CTSE, p. 35-36.

more than a "mere simple commemoration of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ." There is a world of difference between saying that the Mass is a relative sacrifice and saying that it is real, true, proper sacrifice which, however, in the mode or manner of external offering and in that only, is, in the designs of divine Providence, essentially representative of, or relative to, another absolute mode.

We can consider Christ's internal act of offering on Calvary as a theandric action embracing both the preceding Supper and the countless succeeding Masses of ours. We as priests of the New Law do precisely what Christ Himself did at the Last Supper, at His command: "Do this in commemoration of Me."<sup>33</sup> Then were ordained the first priests.<sup>34</sup> Then was first given to men the power to consecrate, that is, to transubstantiate bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. We consecrate by the power of Christ (by His *divine* power), who at each Mass must *actually* move the priest so that he may be able to perform the stupendous miracle of transubstantiation.<sup>35</sup> Making Christ really and truly present

<sup>33</sup> Luke 22:9; I. Cor. 11:24.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. canon of the Council of Trent, Denz. 949.

<sup>35</sup> With regard to the distinction between the essence and mode of sacrifice the following should be noted. Sacrifice is essentially (that is, by definition) an *external* sign of an internal act or state of mind and soul. It is the external offering of something to God. To offer externally and in deed to God is to give over to God absolutely all rights over the object or thing offered. If the thing offered (the objective sacrifice) be a living thing the most expressive manner of offering it to God, humanly speaking, is to kill it. But the actual killing of it is not essential to sacrifice. There are other ways in which it might be made sacred and in that sense given to God sacrificially. In other words, externalization is essential to every sacrifice. But whether in this or that manner (by killing or in any other way that God may decide upon) pertains only to the *mode or manner* of offering. In all this matter it is essential to take into account what God decides, because it is His prerogative to determine the kind of offering and the manner of offering. Consequently no *a priori* rules can be given for judging whether any particular external oblation be sacrificial or not. Everything depends upon what God ordains. Now, Christ offered to God not something that belongs to Him, but Himself, His Body and Blood. Christ willed to offer Himself (interiorly) out of obedience to the decree of His Father. He wished to externalize that will to offer Himself in the manner in which His Father should decide. God, the Father, decreed that Our Lord should offer Himself externally first of all by dying a violent death on the Cross. This

on the altar we (priests) thereby *ratify* in our own human way, by our own personal spirit of devotion or submission, which should flow from our faith and charity, the redemptive sacrifice of Christ. We are swept, as it were, from time into eternity in order to be present again mystically, but really, at Calvary. We make our Lord's sacrifice ours by offering it with Him at Mass, as we would have done had we been present on the first Good Friday on Calvary and had we known what was taking place, namely the sacrifice of our redemption, or as the faithful Jew made the sacrifice of the High Priest his by being present in the temple and by ratifying the action of the priest. Christ is present on our altars actually offering Himself to His Father, and this actual offering is being actually ratified by the priest who consecrates and by all the faithful who unite themselves to him. By consecration the priest places the external signs of Christ's internal oblation of self. These signs represent directly and immediately the will to sacrifice in our Lord's mind. It is defined in the Council of Trent, as we saw above, that the Mass is a real and proper sacrifice, and that it is the sacrifice of Christ by Himself. God willed it so and arranged it so. Pope Pius XII in the Encyclical *Mediator Dei* writes, "The Divine Wisdom has devised a way in which Our Redeemer's sacrifice is marvellously shown forth by *external signs symbolic of death.*"<sup>86</sup> They are external signs—and we saw that some kind of externalization is essential to the notion of sacrifice—not by any death, but of Our Lord's

physical natural death of Christ as such is not of the very essence of sacrifice, but in this case it is *the absolute mode* of His sacrifice. God decreed it so. In the Supper Room Our Lord offered Himself (Body and Blood) externally by transubstantiation. Here we have to do with a real, proper and absolute sacrifice. The mode of offering was different to that of the Cross. And this sacramental mode is seen to be essentially relative to and significative of the absolute mode of Calvary. Hence the double consecration. —At Mass Our Lord actually offers Himself externally (in external sacramental signs) through the ministry of the priests. His priests are instruments in His offering of Himself. There the Mass is an absolute sacrifice, but the mode of offering is essentially symbolic of the absolute mode of Calvary.

<sup>86</sup> Ency. *Mediator Dei*, Engl. trans. CTSE, p. 36.

death on Calvary. And these external signs are placed at Mass by Our Lord himself as principal cause and by the priest as instrumental cause, that is, as the minister of Christ. The priests of the New Law are not the successors of Christ but His ministers—*sacerdotum ministerio*.

It should be said that the sacrifice of Calvary is being ratified *officially*, that is, as by one officially constituted to do so in his own name and in the name of the whole Christian people, by the priest at Mass, for he alone has the power to consecrate. In consecrating, the power, the *divine* power, of Christ flows through the priest. This power was used by Our Lord in the first instance (in the Supper Room) for the one and only purpose of placing the external signs of His internal sacrifice, of His internal act of self-oblation. It follows, consequently, that transubstantiation is *in fact* inseparable from the actual will to sacrifice in the mind of Christ. That is an added reason for maintaining, as many theologians do, that Christ, who must actually consecrate in every Mass as principal cause, must also *actually* offer the sacrifice. We might even say that at Mass not only is Christ actually offering sacrifice, He is in a very true sense the only offerer. At Mass Our Lord does exactly what he did at the Last Supper, with this one difference: at the Last Supper He did everything Himself, whereas at Mass He does it through His priests, His ministers. At the Last Supper He gave to His priests the power to consecrate, to transubstantiate. As often as they consecrate they are in physical contact with Christ, who moves them and elevates them to perform the miracle of transubstantiation. Desiring to consecrate, a priest must also wish to offer Christ's sacrifice. He must offer Christ's sacrifice with Him. In this sense, then, we must say that the priest at Mass really offers sacrifice, not as principal cause or offerer, but as an instrumental cause, as a minister. By virtue of his sacerdotal power he can do this as often as he desires to consecrate whether what he does be a sign of his own personal devotion and charity or not, that is, whether he ratifies Calvary morally

or not he ratifies it always physically. This is the "*opus operatum*" in every Mass. And since the priest offers sacrifice not as a private individual but as the representative of the whole Christian people, it follows that the faithful always derive benefit from every Mass. The faithful have, obviously, their part to play. They are not mere spectators, but are called to take active part in what is taking place at the altar. They must unite themselves to the priest by their own personal acts of submission to the will of God. They must in that way ratify what the priest does at Mass, and consequently through the priest they can, in a very human and straightforward way, ratify what Christ did on Calvary and what He is still doing. They, too, through the priest, make Christ's sacrifice theirs, so that their adoration, their thanksgiving, their supplication and their expiation are, as it were, absorbed into the adoration, thanksgiving, supplication and expiation of Christ and are offered to God by Our Saviour Himself.

It follows from what has been said that the priest of the New Law stands in much the same relation to our one High Priest, who is Christ, as did the faithful Jew to the priest of the Old Law. The priests of the Old Law offered sacrifices as principal causes or agents. The priests of the New Law do not precisely offer sacrifice: they ratify a sacrifice officially, by virtue of their sacerdotal office. It must be understood that at Mass a real sacrifice is offered to God in a visible, external but sacramental way. It is offered by Christ. He is the one and only offerer (sacrificant). In the fullest sense of the word, He is the one and only priest. The human priest by his own devotion and in the name of the people (that is, acting for them, and from that point of view, much as the priests of the Old Law, a caste apart) ratifies it and thus applies its fruits to himself and to the Christian people. There is no greater difficulty with regard to the relation between the act of oblation in Christ's mind and the priest's act of oblation than there was with regard to the relation between the

internal sacrifice of the people in the Old Law and the external sacrifice of the priests.<sup>57</sup>

A person, who assists at the sacrifice of a priest and in the manner explained strives to take part in it by seeing to it that it really be the external manifestation of his own internal oblation, can be truly said to offer sacrifice. He offers the sacrifice of the priest, with the priest and subordinated to the priest. In that sense it can be said: he offers sacrifice. In that sense, too, the priest of the New Law can and must be said to offer sacrifice. He offers Christ's sacrifice, with Christ and subordinated to Christ. He is never a principal agent in the actual sacrifice. He offers the Body and Blood of Christ to God the Father (which is quite a different thing from saying that he offers sacrifice to God) by uniting himself to the sacrificial offering of Christ, the one High Priest of the New Law. And in that way Christian priests share in a most marvellous manner in the Priesthood of Christ. And in that precisely consists their dignity and pre-eminence over all the priests of the Old Law. In the encyclical *Ad Catholicum Sacerdotium* of Pope Pius XI we read:

And thus the ineffable greatness of the human priest stands forth in all its splendour; for he has power over the very body of Jesus Christ and makes it present upon our altars. In the name of

<sup>57</sup> Two things should be noted carefully here. 1) First, that the sacerdotal power of the New Law consists not precisely in the power to offer sacrifice as such, but in being able to consecrate or transubstantiate with a view to uniting oneself to and making one's own the redemptive act of Calvary. 2) Secondly, that the Sacrifice of the Mass is the Sacrifice of Christ whole and entire, that is, of the Mystical Body of Christ. When the priest consecrates he is never acting as a private individual (whatever his private dispositions may be), but as the representative of the Mystical Body of Christ. Consequently, should the priest not ratify in his own person the sacrifice of Calvary (for instance, by leading a sinful life) the sacrifice of Christ would still be offered because consecration or transubstantiation would still take place. That is, the will to sacrifice in Christ's mind would be really externalized sacramentally. That is, of course, if the priest, however evil personally, wishes to do at least what the Church intends (*habet intentionem faciendi quod facit Ecclesia*). Should the priest, then, not ratify the sacrifice of Calvary, the people are enabled to do so through his power of consecration.

Christ Himself he offers It a victim infinitely pleasing to the Divine Majesty.<sup>88</sup>

And Pope Pius XII in the encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ teaches:

Though the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ Our Lord wished to give special evidence to the faith of the union among ourselves and with our Divine Head, marvellous as it is and beyond all praise. For here the sacred ministers act in the person not only of Our Saviour, but of the whole Mystical Body and of everyone of the faithful. In this act of sacrifice through the hands of the priest, whose word alone has brought the Immaculate Lamb to be present on the altar, the faithful themselves with one desire and one prayer offer It to the Eternal Father, the most acceptable victim of praise and propitiation for the Church's universal needs. And just as the Divine Redeemer, dying on the Cross, offered Himself as Head of the whole human race to the Eternal Father, so in "this pure oblation" He offers not only Himself as Head of the Church to the heavenly Father, but in Himself His mystical members as well. He embraces them all, even the weak and ailing ones, in the tenderest love of His Heart.<sup>89</sup>

In this essay I have consciously avoided entering into the dogmatic discussions concerning the essence of the Blessed Eucharist as making present again the sacrifice of Christ and have touched on them only in so far as they were necessary for my own analysis. Both approaches are obviously intimately connected—the moral and the dogmatic, the approach of the dogmatic and of the moral theologian. I venture to hope that this moral or, as the moderns would have it, existential approach may throw some light on the dogmatic problem of the essence and structure of our Christian sacrifice and in that way also help towards a deeper and more enlightened Eucharistic piety.

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<sup>88</sup> Encyl. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, Engl. trans. CTSE, p. 9.

<sup>89</sup> Encyl. *Mystici Corporis Christi*, Engl. trans. America Press, p. 35-36.

## THE SACRAMENTAL CHARACTER AND LITURGY

IN the first chapter of the schema on the liturgy, the Second Vatican Council has provided for an intensification of liturgical thought in the life of the Church in the decades and centuries to come.<sup>1</sup> Part II of the first chapter approved by the Council (though not yet solemnly and definitively) concerns the liturgical formation of the clergy and the people. The liturgy is to be counted among the major disciplines in the seminary curriculum and is to be studied theologically and historically, as well as from spiritual, pastoral, and juridical points of view. Part IV gives directions for promotion of liturgical life in the dioceses and parishes of the world.

The Second Vatican Council has thus set before theologians a challenge for the future. Sacramental theologians in particular must step back from their work, view the sacraments in the context of the whole liturgy, and try to develop a theology which embraces not only the sacraments in their essential matter and form but the whole of the liturgy—the Mass, sacraments, sacramentals, and divine Office. This means finding new principles of greater universality, or new insights into the breadth of familiar principles, in order to have a truly unified theology of the liturgy. Without new principles or new insights into old principles, theology of the liturgy will remain an accidental unity composed of a theology of the sacraments, a theology of sacramentals, and a theology of the divine Office. Needed today and for the future is a theology of the Christian mysteries as the Fathers of the Church understood the term—the whole of the liturgy joining God and man in worship through Christ.

<sup>1</sup> A summary of the first chapter on the liturgy appeared in *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 8, 1962, "I principi generali della riforma liturgica approvati dal Concilio." A complete translation of this article is available in *Worship*, XXXVII (1963), 153-64 under the title "The Approved Chapter One." The points mentioned in text above can be found in this issue of *Worship*, pp. 155, 157, 163.