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**Assessing the Interrelationship between Sacrifice, Real Presence, and  
Communion in Recent Roman Catholic Theology**

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### *Abstract*

In this thesis, I investigate the centrality of the sacrifice in the interrelationship between eucharistic sacrifice, real presence and sacramental communion in recent Roman Catholic theology. I explore different ways in which the Eucharist is understood in today's world.

First, I analyse texts of the Second Vatican Council and post-conciliar texts. The Second Vatican Council and post-conciliar official texts present new ways of discussing the Eucharist, which has put into relief diverse aspects which contribute to a deeper understanding of it.

Then, I examine texts from the theologians Joseph Ratzinger, Edward Schillebeeckx and David Power and evaluate their work in the light of Vatican II and the post-conciliar texts. These theologians were chosen because Ratzinger and Schillebeeckx shared the advantage of being close to the proceedings of the Council, Ratzinger as a peritus and Schillebeeckx as an advisor to Cardinal Archbishop Alfrink from Utrecht, whereas Power did not participate at the Council. All agree on the teachings of Vatican II but each has responded to the unique event of the Council in his own way. I find great variations in their eucharistic theology that are complementary and thus contribute to deeper understanding of the vast complexity of the Eucharist. Ratzinger finds that the heart of the Eucharist lies in the sacrifice. His contributions have an apostolic and hierarchical emphasis. With a *communio-ecclesiology* and an emphasis on the People of God he relates unity and union, but does this in a way that might be interpreted as exclusive and narrow. Schillebeeckx aimed at rethinking classical Christology in the light of historical criticism of Scripture. Sacraments are perceived as relational events of an encounter with God. Liturgy is the celebration of God's interruption into ordinary life giving glimpses of his kingdom. The Eucharist is a performance challenged by the juxtaposition between the verbal and the physical. Power's contribution is the presentation of the eucharistic sacrifice as an "eventing" of God's grace with a great emphasis on the *kenosis* of Christ as gift. He

develops creative interpretations of the sacrament of the Eucharist which he flexibly uses when discussing the eucharistic sacrifice. In his theology he preserves both the unity of the faith as well as allowing its expression in diversity.

Finally, my study confirms that the eucharistic sacrifice is the central act upon which the real presence and communion depend. The Eucharist is the re-presentation of the sacrifice of the cross; and, as such, it expresses the passion, death, resurrection, ascension and the continual presence of Christ in the sacrament, which has its aim in sacramental communion. Although the Eucharist can be expressed in various ways, it embodies the centrality of the sacrificial act.

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Objective of the Thesis*

Defined truth is constant and unchanging in its substance but open to adapt to changes in cultures and society in the modern world.

Vatican II was clearly open to adaptations and to varieties of interpretations. My thesis explores different ways in which the sacrifice of the Mass is understood in today's world.

This thesis assesses the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence, and communion in post-Vatican II Roman Catholic theology. It seeks to establish how the sacrifice fulfils its role of balancing and deepening the liturgical act of the Eucharist. A new ecclesiology developed during Vatican II, placing the Eucharist at the centre of the Church, this consideration is highlighted in this thesis.

The reason for this study is to clarify in what aspects Vatican II and post-Vatican II theology contributed to the understanding of eucharistic theology.<sup>1</sup> In this light, I shall evaluate the contributions of three theologians: Joseph Ratzinger, Edward Schillebeeckx, and David Power. They represent diverse approaches and contributions to the theology of the Eucharist and were chosen because they represent very different and complementary ways of understanding eucharistic theology. Ratzinger and Schillebeeckx had as young professors already developed different lines of theology at the time of Vatican II, they have different backgrounds and experiences, and they continued to develop their eucharistic theology during the fifty years that have passed since Vatican II. David Power, on the other hand, was a

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis I have chosen to use the text of the official website of the Holy See <<http://www.vatican.va/>> for references to official church documents whenever this was possible. In the text I will use Eucharist sometimes pertaining to the whole liturgy of the Mass (the liturgy of the Word and that of the Eucharist) and at other times as the liturgy of the Eucharist. Citations from the Scriptures are taken from *NRSV, Fully Revised Fourth Edition*, 2010. For Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, see <<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>>.

younger professor of theology who started to develop his eucharistic theology at the end of the Council. This gave him a possibility to form his theology in the new atmosphere of freedom and openness that came with the Council. Pope John XXIII had hoped for such a development when he wrote in the Exhortation *Sacrae laudes*<sup>2</sup> of 6 January 1962 that the Church was on the threshold of a new era, a new epiphany was awaited, not only by Catholics but by people throughout the whole world.<sup>3</sup>

Joseph Ratzinger – later Pope Benedict XVI – served as a peritus at Vatican II, worked as a theology professor in Germany, and was cardinal-prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF)<sup>4</sup> as well as president of both of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and the International Theological Commission. He has spent many years in Rome and has a Western European perspective. Edward Schillebeeckx also took active part at the Council, not as an official peritus but as counsellor to Cardinal Alfrink, Archbishop of Utrecht. In this role he was not bound to confidentiality, thus he was free to influence bishops from all over the world. As a professor of theology he has contributed to the development of Roman Catholic theology in the Netherlands after Vatican II. David Power, a professor of theology, has specialized in eucharistic theology and has contributed with both a European and a non-European perspective.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) is central to this thesis because it is with this as a point of reference that my analysis of the eucharistic sacrifice starts.

Vatican II was a council for a new era, both opening up in an assimilation of the

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<sup>2</sup> For the original text see

<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_exh\\_19620106\\_sacrae-laudis\\_lt.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_j-xxiii_exh_19620106_sacrae-laudis_lt.html)> see also the opening speech for the Council of Vatican II by John XXIII on the 11 October 1962 <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/speeches/1962/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_spe\\_19621011\\_opening-council\\_lt.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/speeches/1962/documents/hf_j-xxiii_spe_19621011_opening-council_lt.html)> [accessed 21 March 2013] “Quod incohatur Concilium, veluti dies in Ecclesia oritur splendidissima luce refulgens. Tantum aurora est; et iam primi orientis solis radii quam suaviter animos afficiunt nostros! Omnia hic sanctitatem spirant, laetitiam excitant.” English transl. is found at <<http://www.ourladyswarriors.org/teach/v2open.htm>> [accessed 21 March 2013]. “The Council now beginning rises in the Church like daybreak, a forerunner of most splendid light. It is now only dawn. And already at this first announcement of the rising day, how much sweetness fills our heart. Everything here breathes sanctity and arouses great joy.”

<sup>3</sup> See René Latourelle, ed. *Twenty-Five Years After (1962-1987)* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988), Volume One, 4.

<sup>4</sup> The “Sacred” was dropped from the titles of Roman dicasteries in 1985, i.e. SCDF became CDF.

philosophical and cultural thinking and praxis of the twentieth century, and keeping its continuity with the great councils of Nicaea and Trent. It was a general council, the largest in the history of the Church. The centrality of the Church may be regarded as one basic theme that imbues all the sixteen documents of the Council.<sup>5</sup> In order to understand its ecclesiology the “The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” *Dei Verbum*, is of the utmost importance. It complements the doctrine of the ecclesiology of the Church as a source document for principles and method and gives a central place to the Word of God.<sup>6</sup> This Word of God is Christ, “Mediator and Fullness of revelation.” It is important to note that Scripture was reaffirmed as having a central role in the Eucharist, where the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the sacrifice are inseparable.<sup>7</sup> What made the Council unique was the breadth of themes, covering among others the nature of the Church.

The Council treated the Church as both institution and mystery of communion; the image of the Church as the people of God; the equal baptismal dignity of all Christians; the Trinitarian origin of the Church, and “the recognition of the principle of collegiality and the principle of the ecclesial nature of the non-Catholic Christian churches.”<sup>8</sup> The liturgy was reformed: “The revised celebration makes it much clearer than in the past that the people of God are a community that offers and sacrifices.”<sup>9</sup>

Vatican II was arguably the most extensive effort at reform that ever took place in the Church. It treated both the inner life of the Church and the Church’s relation to the outside world. It was held in an ecumenical spirit, with observers from other dominations invited to take part. The Council was unique because, unlike most earlier councils, it was not concerned

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<sup>5</sup> See *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Marianne Lorraine Trouvé, FSP., introductions throughout the book by Douglas G. Bushman, S.T.L. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> See René Latourelle, “Vatican II,” in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, eds René Latourelle, and Rino Fisichella (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000), 1158.

<sup>7</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1154-55. “Vatican II was the most extensive reform ever undertaken, not only by its number of council fathers ... but also and above all because of the scope of the subjects taken up...”

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 1158.

with responding to heresies or deviations from the faith, and thus could choose freely which subjects to discuss and promote.

The liturgical reform of the Council is of main importance to this thesis's theme of the interrelationship between the sacrifice, real presence and communion. The generous language used at the Council gives a new breath and variety in expressing the mystery of the Eucharist. The confrontational approach used at the Council of Trent was considered unnecessary. The aim was not to defend the faith but was an invitation for ecumenical dialogue as well as a step forward in emphasising the eucharistic mystery both in its theology and praxis. The self-sacrifice of Christ and the invitation for all the faithful to participate in the self-offering was a new opening-up.<sup>10</sup>

The constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, puts the Church's liturgy in the frame of "the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ and his passing over to the Father through his death, resurrection and ascension."<sup>11</sup> This is the foremost mystery, with which Jesus glorified God and accomplished human redemption. According to the Second Vatican Council in *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, as the expression of the Paschal mystery, the Eucharist contains the entire spiritual wealth of the Church: "Christ himself, our Passover and the living bread."<sup>12</sup> The Paschal mystery is "the font from which all the sacraments and the sacramentals draw their power."<sup>13</sup>

Another noteworthy characteristic of Vatican II is the liturgical assembly's active participation in the ecclesial act under the ministry of the presiding priest. The Fathers of the Council articulated, asserted, and emphasized the communal nature of the liturgy of the

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<sup>10</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10. "[t]he renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire."

<sup>11</sup> Bushman, *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, 41.

<sup>12</sup> See the Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5. See also Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, para.1. (all references to church documents are referred to as paragraphs not pages), was promulgated by John Paul II on 17 April 2003 <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/special\\_features/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_20030417\\_ecclesia\\_eucharistia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_en.html)> [accessed 16 August 2012].

<sup>13</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 61.

Church.<sup>14</sup> In *Sacrosanctum Concilium* there is an obvious connection between the eucharistic sacrifice, faith and baptism. Furthermore, *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, also speaks of the importance of taking part in the eucharistic sacrifice because this is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life.<sup>15</sup> “Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It.”<sup>16</sup> The liturgy is the central activity of the Church. It is an apostolic activity where the faithful “should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s Supper.”<sup>17</sup>

Theologians have long debated the nature of sacrifice in the Eucharist.<sup>18</sup> Many theologians agree that the Mass is a sacrifice and have contributed in different ways to its understanding. However, the mystery of the Eucharist is vast and cannot be grasped in an intellectual work alone but needs to be lived in the liturgy. An example of this immensity of the eucharistic sacrifice may be seen in Pope John Paul II’s Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, in which he confirms that the Mass is a true sacrifice,<sup>19</sup> and in *Dominicae Cena*, that Mass is above all a sacrifice.<sup>20</sup> In both texts, John Paul II does not give any explanation of

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 14. “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’ (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.”

<sup>15</sup> See Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution of the Church), 11.  
<[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html)> (Promulgated 21 November 1964), [accessed 1 December 2011].

<sup>16</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 11. See also Bushman, *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, 135 ref to Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei* promulgated 20 November 1947

<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_20111947\\_mediator-dei\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20111947_mediator-dei_en.html)> [accessed 14 January 2012]. See especially 118 about the sacrifice made by the lay faithful “...because they likewise offer it after their own manner.”

<sup>17</sup> Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10. “The liturgy in its turn moves the faithful, filled with ‘the paschal sacraments,’ to be ‘one in holiness’; it prays that ‘they may hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by their faith.’”

<sup>18</sup> See Terrence Prendergast, S.J. “Foreword,” in Michael McGuckian, S.J., *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: A Search for an Acceptable Notion of Sacrifice* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2005), vii.

<sup>19</sup> See *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 11. Cf. Heinrich Denzinger and Peter Hünermann eds, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 2005), 1638. Numbers refer to paragraphs.

<sup>20</sup> See Pope John Paul II, *Dominicae Cena*, 9, promulgated 24 February 1980  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii LET\\_24021980\\_dominicae-cenae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii LET_24021980_dominicae-cenae_en.html) > [accessed 21 December 2011].

the way in which he understands the Mass as a sacrifice. The generous richness of the eucharistic sacrifice has concerned some of the most prominent theologians of eucharistic theology, such as Hans Küng,<sup>21</sup> Raymond Moloney,<sup>22</sup> and Edward Kilmartin, S.J.,<sup>23</sup> who have contended with these aspects of the eucharistic sacrifice. Kilmartin, for example, says, “if we [the partakers] do not understand the sacrifice, we do not understand the Eucharist and do not understand the Church.”<sup>24</sup> What Kilmartin underscores is the joyous possibility for the faithful to take part in the great mystery of Christ’s self-offering to the Father. *Sacrosanctum concilium* describes in a beautiful way that the Eucharist is integral to the Church:

From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way.<sup>25</sup>

The aspect of bringing the Church into the modern world was emphasised and already prepared in John XXIII’s speech at the opening of Vatican II. He states as the origin of, and reason, for Vatican II; “In fact, by bringing herself [the Church] up to date where required, and by the wise organization of mutual co-operation, the Church will make men, families, and peoples really turn their minds to heavenly things.”<sup>26</sup> This is a new rapprochement to contemporary culture.

This new development invites a novel approach to the old debate of “Real Presence”. This initiative leads to the second aspect I want to consider the concepts presence and the real presence.

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<sup>21</sup> See Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian* (London: SCM, 1977), 425.

<sup>22</sup> See Raymond Moloney, *The Eucharist* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1995), 212.

<sup>23</sup> See Edward J. Kilmartin, SJ, *The Eucharist in the West*, ed. Robert J. Daly, S.J. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998), xxiv.

<sup>24</sup> Michael McGuckian, S.J., *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: A Search for an Acceptable Notion of Sacrifice*, (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2005), 1.

<sup>25</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.

<sup>26</sup> See second part of John XXIII’s *Address on the occasion of the solemn opening of the Most Holy Council* (October 11, 1962) < [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/speeches/1962/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_spe\\_19621011\\_opening-council\\_lt.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/speeches/1962/documents/hf_j-xxiii_spe_19621011_opening-council_lt.html) > [accessed 18 March 2013].



At the time of Vatican II it was necessary to recognize the different manners of the presence of Christ. The central mystery of the Mass is understood as the sacrificial mystery of the presence of Christ. Vatican II allows the Eucharist to move on from ancient debates about the Real Presence to a broad affirmation of its truth. My thesis affirms the importance of “real presence” understood as “Real Presence” embracing the sacrifice of the Mass. Christ’s presence is a sacrificial presence. Therefore, the Eucharist and the Church as community may be understood as sacrificial and its relationship in the world as a sacrificial relationship. This presence can be manifested in a variety of ways. Gerald O’Collins proposes the characteristics of presence as “relational, mediated, personal, free, transformative, costly, bodily, multiform, feminine, and future-oriented.”<sup>27</sup> When looking at *Mysterium Fidei*, the Encyclical on the Holy Eucharist (Paul VI, September 1965), the text confirms the Council of Trent’s definition of transubstantiation.<sup>28</sup> However, it opens up new ways of expressing “real presence” and “transubstantiation.”<sup>29</sup> Regarding definitions and explanations, Paul VI was of the opinion that a greater clarity of expression is always possible, but warned against beliefs being changed under any pretext.<sup>30</sup> At this point, it is crucial to note that Vatican II takes up Christ’s presence

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<sup>27</sup> See Gerald O’Collins, S.J. “Vatican II on the Liturgical Presence of Christ,” in *Irish Theological Quarterly* 77(1) 3-17. Cf. John H. McKenna, C.M. “Eucharistic Presence: An Invitation to Dialogue” in *Theological Studies* 60 (1999), 294- 317. Cf. Judith Marie Kubicki, C.S.S.F. “Recognizing the Presence of Christ in the Liturgical Assembly,” in *Theological Studies* 65(2004), 817-837. Cf. Michael G. Witzak “The Manifold Presence of Christ in the Liturgy” in *Theological Studies* 59 (1998), 680-702.

<sup>28</sup> See Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum Et Declarationum De Rebus Fidei Et Morum*. 40 ed., Ed. Peter Hünermann (Freiburg: Herder, 2005). 1636; 1651. Note that references to Denzinger always use the paragraph number. See also Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist: The Origin of the Rite and the Development of Its Interpretation*, trans. Mathew J. O’Connell (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 215.

<sup>29</sup> The meaning of transubstantiation built on the theology of the Council of Constance, which opted for the interpretation made by Thomas Aquinas. In a further development from the patristic era Aquinas elaborated on a new kind of Aristotelian philosophy. See Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 207 for a discussion on how Aquinas built four causes devised by Aristotle: two internal (material and formal) and two external (efficient and final). See *ibid.*, 215. The Fourth Council of the Lateran in 1215 used the term transubstantiation, and since then it became the standard and was accepted by all.

<sup>30</sup> Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 24-25 (Encyclical on the Holy Eucharist) promulgated 3 September 1965 <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_03091965\\_mysterium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_03091965_mysterium_en.html)> [accessed 21 December 2011]. “They can, it is true, be made clearer and more obvious; and doing this is of great benefit. But it must always be done in such a way that they retain the meaning in which they have been used, so that with the advance of an understanding of the faith, the truth of faith will remain unchanged. “For it is the teaching of the First Vatican Council that ‘the meaning that Holy Mother the Church has once declared, is to be retained forever, and no pretext of deeper understanding ever justifies any deviation from that meaning.’”

in a variety of modes, and not only as “real presence.” Five modes are mentioned specifically: in the action of his minister; in the eucharistic species; in the sacraments; in His word; and in the assembly gathered to pray and sing.<sup>31</sup> Four of these modes had already been described by Pius XII in his 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei*; the fifth – Christ’s presence in the word – was added in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

Active participation in the liturgy and frequent communion are encouraged by Vatican II.<sup>32</sup> Active participation is described not only as an external activity, but also as the inner activity of individuals’ self-offering and partaking in the Church’s offering of itself, continued and purified in the sacramental sacrifice of Christ to his Father. This act is a complex reality, to which I shall return later in this thesis. The thanksgiving made at the preparation of the gifts at the start of the eucharistic Liturgy is closely related to the communion, because it prepares the faithful to accept the gift of Christ as spiritual nourishment.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, it leads to the unity of the Church and the praxis of love when the inner and outer acts coincide. Communion is partaking of Christ in his totality as a person: human and divine. Communion, insofar as it is eating and drinking, relates intimately to the praxis of the Eucharist. In recent years, Church teaching has found it necessary to recall that communicating requires an attitude of repentance and, if necessary, sacramental confession before receiving this sacrament.<sup>34</sup>

This thesis concerns the contemporary theology of the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic Church and relates to those aspects of the Eucharist that I have discussed thus far. The Liturgy of the Mass is one single act that consists of both the liturgy of the Word and that of the Eucharist. My discussions will not concentrate on the liturgy of the Word, but on the liturgy of

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<sup>31</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7.

<sup>32</sup> See *ibid.*, 14; 30. Cf. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 15.

<sup>33</sup> James Socías, ed., *Daily Roman Missal* (Chicago, Illinois: Midwest Theological Forum, 2004), 689-691.

<sup>34</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament, *Redemptionis sacramentum* (Instruction on certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist), 25 March 2004 <[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccdds\\_doc\\_20040423\\_redemptio-sacramentum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20040423_redemptio-sacramentum_en.html)> [accessed 13 March 2013]. See also *L’Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, 28 April 2004, Special Issue, 3.

the Eucharist, where I highlight the interrelationships between sacrifice, real presence and communion. As a background for my thesis, I shall investigate the debates on Roman Catholic eucharistic theology as expressed in the Documents of Vatican II, post-conciliar Documents and contributions from the well-known Roman Catholic theologians Joseph Ratzinger, Edward Schillebeeckx and David Power. This thesis illustrates tensions between different theologies resulting from contextualising the different understandings of the Eucharist in the modern world.

### ***The Research Question***

In this thesis I address three questions. First, what aspects in the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence, and communion are presented in conciliar and post-conciliar magisterial documents? Second, how may contributions by Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx, and Power be interpreted in the light of these documents? Third, in the light of the magisterial documents studied, is it possible to consider the sacrifice as most central in the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence, and communion?

### ***Limits of the Research***

I limit my study in three ways.

Firstly, I have chosen to study three aspects of the Eucharist: the sacrifice, the real presence and communion as discussed in Roman Catholic theology. I consider the Eucharist to be one whole action, including the liturgy of the Word together with the liturgy of the Eucharist, but I restrict my research to the liturgy of the Eucharist.

Secondly, in order to penetrate the different debates in depth, I have chosen to limit my attention to the prominent Roman Catholic theologians Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx and Power. The reason for this choice is to allow for a diversity of approaches to eucharistic theology. Joseph Ratzinger has a Western European perspective, took an active part at Vatican II and has

a vast knowledge of the Church hierarchy and its perspective; Edward Schillebeeckx has a Northern European perspective and has experience of working at Vatican II. However, his position contrasts with Ratzinger as he was not allowed to be a peritus at the Council, and his theology “from below” was questioned by the CDF. David Power started his writing on the Eucharist at the end of Vatican II, and places the Eucharist also within a non-European and non-Western perspective.<sup>35</sup> He unites sacraments as “eventing word” to traditional Catholic doctrine, accepts diversity of interpretations allowing for unity, and has a socio-critical reinterpretation of hierarchy.

Thirdly, I limit my research to Vatican II and post-Vatican II Church documents.

### ***Method of the Research***

After a discussion on sacramental definitions, I shall identify and trace the way in which the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence, and communion has been described in texts of the Second Vatican Council and post-conciliar official texts of the Roman Catholic Church. Then I shall discuss and evaluate key Vatican II and post-Vatican documents, and lastly the works of Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx, and Power. The latter contributions will then be placed in the light of the official church documents.

In the first chapter, I approach the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion and present some of the concepts and contexts that I use in my thesis, such as sacramental definitions, symbol, sign, sacrament, sacrifice, real presence and communion. In the second chapter, I analyse the eucharistic teachings of Vatican II and post-conciliar documents. Chapter Two starts with an introduction, followed by the document of Vatican II, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. I examine other Church

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<sup>35</sup> He has been visiting professor at St Paul University, Ottawa, Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, St John's University Collegeville, and at seminaries in Tahiti and south Africa. He has also lectured in Australia, Pakistan, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. He has been a recipient of the Berakah Award of the North American Academy of Liturgy (1992) and the John Courtney Murray Award of the Catholic Theological Society of America (1985).

documents such as the Encyclical by Pope Paul VI on the Holy Eucharist, *Mysterium Fidei*, and the Instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* of the Congregation of Rites in 1967,<sup>36</sup> the Holy Thursday letter *Dominicae Cena*e by Pope John Paul II of 1980, the Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* of by Pope John Paul II of 2003, and the Apostolic Letter for the Year of the Eucharist (October 2004 – October 2005), *Mane Nobiscum Domine* (Stay With us Lord) by Pope John Paul II of 2004.<sup>37</sup> Lastly, I study the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*<sup>38</sup> of by Pope Benedict XVI. In this Chapter I also discuss and analyse Ratzinger's reinterpretation of the ecclesiology of Vatican II and some suggestions for the implementation of the Second Vatican Council.

Chapters Three to Five successively discuss the eucharistic theology of Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx and Power.

In Chapter Three on the theology of Joseph Ratzinger, I start with the anthology *God Is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*,<sup>39</sup> in which he gives a description of faith in God's presence as divine self-communication in the Church, and in an exceptional way in the Eucharist. In *Introduction to Christianity*,<sup>40</sup> Ratzinger points to the hidden quality of God that takes on the scandalous form of visibility as the Crucified One. In the next two books, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*<sup>41</sup> and *Zur Gemeinschaft Gerufen: Kirche Heute Verstehen*,<sup>42</sup> he treats the

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<sup>36</sup> See Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* (also known as Instruction on the Eucharistic Worship) promulgated on 25 March 1967. See <<http://www.catholicliturgy.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/documentText/Index/2/SubIndex/11/ContentIndex/339/Start/338>> [accessed 19 January 2013].

<sup>37</sup> See Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine* was promulgated on 8 October 2004 <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_20041008\\_mane-nobiscum-domine\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20041008_mane-nobiscum-domine_en.html)> [accessed 17 July 2012].

<sup>38</sup> See Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (also known as On the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission) was promulgated 22 February 2007. <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20070222\\_sacramentum-caritatis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html)> [accessed 17 July 2012].

<sup>39</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, ed. Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003).

<sup>40</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004) trans. J. R. Foster with a new preface trans. by Michael J. Miller.

<sup>41</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000) trans. John Saward).

<sup>42</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *Zur Gemeinschaft gerufen, Kirche Heute Verstehen*. Benedictus. (Freiburg im Breisgau ; Basel ; Wien: Herder, 1991).

communion of the faithful in the Eucharist and the communal aspects of the celebration of the Liturgy. The *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*<sup>43</sup> presents guidance on how to interpret sacrifice, sacrament and priesthood. Foremost, he explains his teaching on the Church as the sacrament of salvation; this connects well to Vatican II's dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*. I end Chapter Three with a conclusion evaluating Ratzinger's contribution to the interpretation of the question on the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence, and communion.

In Chapter Four I present Edward Schillebeeckx, and primarily his works *The Eucharist*,<sup>44</sup> *Christ the Sacrament*,<sup>45</sup> *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*,<sup>46</sup> *Christ: The Christian Experience in the Modern World*,<sup>47</sup> and *Church: The Human Story of God*.<sup>48</sup> The reason for selecting *The Eucharist* is that it aims at clarifying the real presence of Christ in the theological debates on the Eucharist of the 1950s and 1960s. In this book, Schillebeeckx speaks about new approaches to "transubstantiation," such as changes in philosophical language. In *Christ the Sacrament*, he discusses both Christ as the primordial sacrament and the Church as the sacrament of the risen Christ. In his book *Jesus*, he emphasizes Jesus as a living person. The Eucharist brings a quality of Christ's presence, which Schillebeeckx points out. This personal quality in the Eucharist is a presence for those taking part. The presence is personal, interpersonal, and reciprocal, and gives those taking part in the Eucharist an opportunity to give a personal answer to Christ. In *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, the community of the faithful as well as the hierarchical Church is discussed. Schillebeeckx develops how the

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<sup>43</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology* trans. Mary Frances McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989).

<sup>44</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *The Eucharist*, trans. N.D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1968).

<sup>45</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Christ the Sacrament*, no information on trans. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963).

<sup>46</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, trans. Hubert Hoskins, (London: Collins, 1979). Cf. *Jesus: Die Geschichte von einem Lebenden* (Freiburg/Base/Wien: Herder, Dritte Auflage 1975).

<sup>47</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Christ: The Christian Experience of Jesus as Lord* (subtitled in the U.K. *The Christian Experience in the Modern World*), trans. John Bowden (New York: Crossroad/London: SCM, 1980).

<sup>48</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Church: The Human Story of God*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1990).

Church is a sign, a sacrament, of salvation in *Church: The Human Story of God*. For him the Church “is not concerned with winning as many souls as possible for itself”<sup>49</sup> but is “an ambiguous historical phenomenon”<sup>50</sup> that both reveals and conceals the salvation in the world.<sup>51</sup> Using these books, I evaluate Schillebeeckx’s contribution to theology on the Eucharist related to the Church, with a special emphasis on praxis – a central point of reference for Schillebeeckx. I end the Chapter with a conclusion assessing his contributions to the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence, and communion.

In Chapter Five, I discuss David Power’s contribution to conversations on the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. I base my research mainly on his books *The Sacrifice We Offer: The Tridentine Dogma and Its Reinterpretation*,<sup>52</sup> *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition*,<sup>53</sup> *Sacrament: The Language of God’s Giving*,<sup>54</sup> and *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of Liturgy*. Power recalls that knowing how to use general principles for interpreting dogmas is vital to understanding them. He describes in his research on eucharistic sacrifice the problems that existed before the Council of Trent. He aims at restoring some of the sacredness of the tradition around the Eucharist, and applies it to the post-Vatican period. Power discusses the possibility for an interpretation of Trent and “a way of re-reception which might open new avenues of dialogue touching both doctrine and practice.”<sup>55</sup> He points out the “inevitable inseparability of doctrine and practice” and in this way he addresses the problem of how to make the Eucharist vital to contemporary Christians.<sup>56</sup> His interest in the current understanding of the Eucharist has resulted in ecumenical dialogue with different Christian

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>51</sup> See Mary Catherine Hilbert, and Robert J. Schreiter, eds, *The Praxis of the Reign of God: An Introduction to the theology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 136-139.

<sup>52</sup> See David N. Power, O.M.I., *The Sacrifice We Offer: The Tridentine Dogma and its Reinterpretation* (New York: Crossroad, 1987).

<sup>53</sup> See David N. Power, O.M.I., *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition* (New York: Crossroad, 1994).

<sup>54</sup> See David N. Power, O.M.I., *Sacrament: The Language of God’s Giving* (New York: Crossroad, 1999).

<sup>55</sup> Power, *The Sacrifice We Offer*, xv.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

denominations in the West, and with the Eastern churches, and has been a great contribution to ecumenism. Power's approach to revitalizing the eucharistic mystery uses hermeneutics, discussing the role of language and symbol. I give particular attention to symbol when it relates to sacramental presence. I also present Power's interpretation of memorial, representation and metaphor as a means to understand the Eucharistic sacrifice. Furthermore, I examine Power's discussion on the notion of gift. "Gift," says Power, is the language of God's giving, which gives the possibility of a response for men and women in thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is seen as a ritual act, and is connected to the praxis of the faithful in life outside the liturgy. I highlight Power's interpretation of the Eucharist as an event. The Chapter ends with an evaluation of Power's theology concerning the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence, and communion.

In Chapter Six, I compare and evaluate the different contributions made by Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx and Power in the light of Vatican II. I comment on similarities, complementarities and differences of these theologians' eucharistic theology on the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion.

I end the thesis with general conclusions on the importance of sacrifice in the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence, and communion. I argue that the results from my study of Vatican II, post-conciliar texts, and the contributions of Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx and Power show that the interrelationship between sacrifice, eucharistic presence and communion is expressed in multiple and complementary ways in magisterial documents and in the writing of these theologians. I pay attention to the Eucharist as both sacrifice and sacrament. I conclude that the sacrifice is the central action of the Eucharist allowing for the sacramental communion to be the completion of the sacrament and I comment on its place in the modern world. I reflect on the understanding of the Eucharist in today's world interpreted in a conservative, assimilative and liberal way. The sacrifice, I argue, although possible to understand in a variety of ways, remains one single unifying action.



## CHAPTER ONE

### APPROACHING THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SACRIFICE, REAL PRESENCE, AND COMMUNION

#### Introduction

The Eucharist, it may be said, has its origin in the Last Supper. It is an action that Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to reiterate in his memory, until he returns.<sup>57</sup> From the earliest times of Christianity, the Church has sought to express the meaning of this sacred action. The Last Supper is the constitutive event and foundational sacrament of Christ's body the Church.<sup>58</sup> However, controversies on how to live out and interpret this act had already started at the time of the apostles, and have continued during the centuries.<sup>59</sup>

The Eucharist is an act of remembrance and a thanksgiving made by the Church for the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and his Resurrection. This act has been interpreted as a re-presentation of Christ's death on the Cross,<sup>60</sup> a making present of his Resurrected Body and making possible the communion in his body and blood.<sup>61</sup> The gift of the Eucharist is an

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<sup>57</sup> See Mt 26:26-29; I Cor 11:23-25; Lk 22:19-20; I Cor 11:23-25.

<sup>58</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 38. He points out that there is a variety of narratives, "not reducible to an *ur-story*."

<sup>59</sup> See I Cor 11:17-22, 29; See Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 161-162. The Patristic period had an understanding of the Eucharist based on typology, as also used by the apostle Paul. However, from the fourth century onwards the synthesis of biblical data and the Eucharist was broken and, as a result, the Middle Ages developed two different ways of dealing with the Eucharist: the figural method and the method of sacramental realism. The figural method arose from typology, but it lost its connection with ontology and became allegorism. See also Mazza, 186. The controversy in the ninth century between Ratramnus, who held a more spiritual interpretation of Christ in the Eucharist, and Paschasius Radbert, who argued for a more realist interpretation, followed by the controversy with Berengar of Tours. See also Mazza., 190. "Thomas Aquinas describes Berengarius as the inventor of a heresy that 'maintains that the body and blood of Christ are present in this sacrament only as in a sign.'" The Reformation debates reflected questions regarding the nature of the real presence, as well as the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist, and the specific role of the priest. For a further discussion see Charles Journet, *The Mass: The Presence of the Sacrifice of the Cross* trans. Victor Szcurek. South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2008, 249-267. Appendix 2, on Theological Approaches to the Mystery.

<sup>60</sup> See Journet, *The Mass*, 47-48.

<sup>61</sup> In the Eucharist, Christ gives himself as bread so that all human beings may have life through him. Jn 6:51 says, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." The sacramental form is one of the ways in which Christ has chosen to be present in the life of Christians. Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 48.

expression of God's love.<sup>62</sup>

Concepts such as sacramental definitions, symbol, sign, sacrament, sacrifice and real presence have been used to describe what takes place at the liturgical act of the Eucharist. In order to develop my thesis that the sacrifice, which is performed at the consecration of bread and wine, is the central act of the Eucharist, holding together the whole act and resulting in real presence and sacramental communion, I shall discuss the use of these concepts. I will also use the interrelationship between these concepts to take a step further and reflect how the sacrifice holds together the whole act. In doing this I shall turn my attention to how theologians have shed light on my question.

### *Sacramental Definitions*

In discussions on the Eucharist, the word "sacrament" is used in relation to both signs and symbols. I shall explore these relationships. I shall then apply these to my argumentation on sacrifice, real presence and communion.

The early Christians who wanted to express the *mysterion*<sup>63</sup> as the place for salvation came to use vocabulary taken from the old Roman pagan religion and called it *sacramentum*. The word had its meaning from *sacrare* and *sacrum*, which meant "a legal transfer of a person or thing" from the secular world and placing it in the realm of the *sacrum*, "in which special rights and duties imposed by the gods were in force."<sup>64</sup>

The Church Fathers transferred *sacramentum* to the ecclesial-theological vocabulary. Tertullian (c.160-c.225) was first to use the term *sacramentum* for the act of baptism and the

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<sup>62</sup> "I have no pleasure in the food that perishes nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Christ, from the seed of David; and for drink I desire his blood, which is imperishable love." Ignatius of Antioch, *To the Romans* 7,3, ed. & trans. Bart Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers I* (Loeb Classical Library 24; Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press), 279.

<sup>63</sup> Herbert Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 44. In Old Latin, *mysterion*, was translated either with the imitative word *mysterium* or with *sacramentum*.

<sup>64</sup> See Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, 44.

Eucharist, thus narrowing the scope of the concept.<sup>65</sup> Augustine of Hippo (354-430) used *sacramentum* in a category of *signa*, visible signs of an invisible reality.<sup>66</sup> *Sacramentum* is for him a *sacrum signum*, a sign that God uses to point to divine reality (*res divina*) and the reality that is contained in it. Augustine also defines sacraments from the point of knowledge; he does not use sense knowledge (*videtur*) but intellectual knowledge (*intelligitur*).<sup>67</sup> He also uses a definition of a metaphysical kind based on likeness (*similitudo*), which corresponds to the Greek *homoiôma*.<sup>68</sup> *Similitudo* refers to that which does not belong to the senses.<sup>69</sup> Augustine refers to Christ who is the Word and the mystery of God stating: “For there is no other mystery of God, except Christ.”<sup>70</sup> He holds that although it must be celebrated in a visible way, it must be understood as something invisible. For him *sacramenta* are “signs composed of an element, perceptible to the senses, and an interpretive word.”<sup>71</sup> From this, it is concluded that the aim of the Eucharist is to point to God and that the reality contained in the Eucharist is Christ the Word of God.

Sacraments are referred to as symbolic actions as well as signs. There are three ways in which Thomas Aquinas (1225-1273) describes this. He writes that a sacrament is foremost a memorial symbol, *signum rememorativum*. “That is, it is remembering, a narrative recall of a

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<sup>65</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> See *ibid.*, 45. “A sacrifice, therefore, is the visible sacrament of sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice;” Cf. *Summa Theologica*, Part III, questions 60-65.

<sup>67</sup> Augustinus, Aurelius, Edmund Hill, John E. Rotelle and Augustinian Heritage Institute. intr., trans., and notes Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle, *The Works of Saint Augustine : A Translation for the 21st Century. P. 3, Sermons, Vol. 7, Sermons 230-272b : On the Liturgical Seasons*. (New York: New City Press, 1993), Sermon 272, 300; Sermo 272, PL 38, 1246; <[http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/openurl?url\\_ver=Z39.88-2004&res\\_dat=xri:pdl&rft\\_dat=xri:pdl:ft:all:PN391126](http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:pdl&rft_dat=xri:pdl:ft:all:PN391126)> [accessed 25 March 2013] “Ista, fratres, ideo dicuntur Sacramenta, quia in eis aliud videtur, aliud intelligitur. Quod videtur, speciem habet corporalem, quod intelligitur, fructum habet spirituale.” Trans. “The reason these things, brothers and sisters, are called sacraments is that in them one thing is seen, another is to be understood. What can be seen has a bodily appearance, what is to be understood provides spiritual fruit.”

<sup>68</sup> See Mazza, *Ibid*, 157.

<sup>69</sup> See *ibid.*, 159. Ambrose’s perception of *Similitudo* as a category that does not exhaust the understanding of sacrament.

<sup>70</sup> See *Catechism of The Catholic Church* (CCC), 774; St. Augustine, Ep.187, 11, 34; PL 33, 846.

<sup>71</sup> Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, 50.

past that, through the effective sign, becomes present.”<sup>72</sup> Secondly, the sacrament is “a sign of grace at work in the present (*signum demonstrativum*)”. This sign points to the divine Spirit. The Spirit “here and now is effective divine love, human love and forgiveness of the human person.”<sup>73</sup> Thirdly, a sacrament is “an effective anticipation of the future (*signum prognosticum*)”<sup>74</sup>. The future is the perfection of creation and the reign of God. This threefold explanation includes a “making-present of all history as salvation history in every individual sacrament.”<sup>75</sup> Herbert Vorgrimler points out: “There is no satisfactory general concept of ‘sacrament’ because there is no general sacrament: there are only concrete individual sacraments.”<sup>76</sup> This is also confirmed by Regis Duffy, who writes that sacraments belong together with the liturgical context, and they are placed in salvation history. He explains further, “sacraments are highly focused action-words within a larger liturgical context.”<sup>77</sup> Moreover, “To speak of ‘Sacraments’ in a general way is to deprive them of their normal setting, the liturgical life of the Church.”<sup>78</sup>

Duffy finds four stages in the understanding of the sacrament: the Augustinian synthesis, the medieval synthesis, the Reformation challenge, and the contemporary retrieval. He summarises this, stating that the earlier symbolic thinking shifted to medieval instrumental thinking, followed by a partial retrieval of symbolic thinking during the Reformation and Counter Reformation, and that today there is “an on-going retrieval of the symbolic.”<sup>79</sup>

David Power prefers not to use a definition in order to grasp sacrament, but a descriptive

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 90; Johannes Baptist Metz, *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (Mainz:1977), 185. [English translation: *Faith in History and Society* (New York: Seabury, 1980), 206.]

<sup>73</sup> See Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, 90.

<sup>74</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* Vorgrimler also holds that something is lost if the sacrament is celebrated in an attenuated rite because this draws attention to the grace-filled event of the moment, but does not pertain to the abiding past in the present and also not to the future that has already begun.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>77</sup> Regis A. Duffy, “Sacraments in General,” in *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin, (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1991), 183.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>79</sup> See *ibid.*, 191.

and practical guide to the practice of the sacramental celebration itself.<sup>80</sup> He points to two aspects when speaking about sacrament: the bodily actions and the language. Both of these are complex and they interact in the liturgy. From a cultural perspective, he holds that the bodily actions are more stable through cultures than the language event.<sup>81</sup> To understand this, Power holds, it is always important “to have a broad perception of what is done in the sacrament, of what forms and means of communication are employed, and of that to which it refers, lest it be reduced to the ritual alone, or its word be reduced to ritual consecration, ritual narrative, or ritual proclamation.”<sup>82</sup> Without attention to the complexity of this situation, there is a risk that we will define ritual action, or ritual consecration, ritual narrative or ritual proclamation too narrowly.<sup>83</sup> This was the case in scholastic theology, writes Power, and thus the Eucharist was defined only in terms of ritual actions, remote and narrow matter, and a form that resided in specific words. This resulted in the reduction of the essence of the sacraments to certain actions and words of the minister, isolated from the rest of the celebration for the sake of defining its essence.<sup>84</sup> Power proposes another way to describe sacrament: “Sacramental liturgy is in fact a mixture of appeal to written text, oral expression, and nonverbal, bodily, and visual involvement, within specific cultures.”<sup>85</sup> He develops this approach by making it evident that it is always the word in the liturgy of the Eucharist which is central for reflection, proclamation, confirmation, “affirmed for its truth and its ethical consequences.”<sup>86</sup>

In this subsection I have discussed the origin of the Eucharist at the Last Supper and how the Church tried to express its meaning through time. I have pointed to the interpretation of the Eucharist as a sign of an inner reality, which is a making-present of all history of salvation. Eucharist as a sacrament is located within the genre of signs because of its very nature, and

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<sup>80</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 37.

<sup>81</sup> See *ibid.*, 38.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>83</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> See *ibid.*, 37-38

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>86</sup> See *ibid.*

does not need a convention based on agreement. However, sacraments are not merely signs, but are also symbols of a religious nature. Sacraments can be precisely described as symbolic actions that mediate the presence of God. The Eucharist is not merely pointing to a reality, the presence of Christ; rather, it brings forth this reality. When the terms “sign” and “symbol” are both used to describe the Eucharist, some may find this confusing. In the next subsection, I shall consider the concepts of sign and symbol and attempt to clarify how they are used in order to shed light on the expression of the mystery of the Eucharist.

### ***Sign and Symbol in Salvation History***

#### ***Sign***

Sign is related to sacrament, as is symbol, but in a different way. Sign has been used as long as theology has reflected on the understanding of sacrament. However, the term has a broad extension.<sup>87</sup> There are different kinds of signs: some point towards something distant or absent, and others are a matter of convention: for example traffic signals.

Emminghaus puts it this way: “Signs never derive their meaning solely from themselves; their vitality always depends in large measure on the experiences and conventions of a given group (for the signs of faith, the group is the Church).”<sup>88</sup> The symbol, on the other hand is a more precise term, although there is no total agreement on its use. Symbol is primarily connected with recognition, understanding and communication. The word *symbolum* has been used as a name for the Christian creed as a sign of recognition.<sup>89</sup> As for many concepts, there is no total agreement for the use of symbol. To clarify the basic differences between signs and symbols, one can say that signs are static, fixed and representations of something absent, whereas symbols are relational events. Symbols create relationships, belong to an intentional

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<sup>87</sup> See Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, 68.

<sup>88</sup> Johannes H. Emminghaus, *The Eucharist: Essence, Form, Celebration*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1978), xv.

<sup>89</sup> See Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, 68.

field, and lead to an understanding that is “relational, dynamic and process-oriented.”<sup>90</sup> The use of both sign and symbol in discussing the Eucharist have varied over time.

St. Augustine, for example, claims that a sign “leads to knowledge of something other than itself,”<sup>91</sup> whereas, for Power “symbols make present the things that they signify and thus allow communion with them.”<sup>92</sup> Aquinas exemplifies this aspect, writing that Christ’s body is presented in a sign and that it cannot be seen.<sup>93</sup> He speaks about sign as the sensible cause of a hidden effect.<sup>94</sup> However, in considering sacraments as “a kind of sign” Aquinas also ascribes causation to them, and this notion is for him more powerful than sign.<sup>95</sup>

Fisichella explains that a sign may have a historical dimension, a component of mediation, and that it furthermore creates communication.<sup>96</sup> A sign is created to further communication, to create a relationship between the source from which it comes and the person to whom it is directed. It is dependent on a context in order to understand its right meaning. The sign can be used in a personalistic way, meaning that the sign has a relationship to its object and is interpreted as a change from *sign* to *the sign*. One example of this is that the person of Christ may be said to be the sign for human beings to understand the mystery of God.<sup>97</sup> The historical dimension is emphasised in the teaching that the Church, as a visible community, is the sign in history that transmits the word of Christ.<sup>98</sup> The component of mediation is necessary to keep the cognitive context of the sign. If the original meaning of the sign is changed too

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>91</sup> Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* II, 1: PL 34, 35 as cited in Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, 61.

<sup>92</sup> Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, 61.

<sup>93</sup> *ST*, III, q. 76, a. 7. For translation see <<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/4076.htm#article7>> [accessed 21 March 2013]. Since “the substance as such is not visible to the bodily eye and is not accessible to any of the senses or the imagination but only to the intellect, the object of which is the essence of a thing...[it is therefore perceptible] only by the intellect, which is called a spiritual eye.” Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 203 writes: “Consequently, neither the angels nor the demons can see the body of Christ in the Sacrament.”

<sup>94</sup> See *ST*, I, q. 70, a. 2.

<sup>95</sup> See *ST*, III, q. 62, a.1.

<sup>96</sup> See René Latourelle and Rino Fisichella, eds, *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 988.

<sup>97</sup> See *ibid.*, 987. Cf. John 8:12. “Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’ ”

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *Dei Verbum*, 2; 4; *Lumen Gentium*, 1; 15.

much, the sign might lose its significance and is then no more the sign it was supposed to be. This is the reason for the importance of sociocultural context. The sign must both present itself to the senses and remain in the historical context.<sup>99</sup>

There is also the dimension of sign that emphasises a connection between the historical meaning and the *aims* of the sign. Fisichella has observed “no one can be neutral about the sign, since a choice is required to identify what is signified.”<sup>100</sup> He states that, “signs therefore make us grasp, be it the unstoppable march toward knowledge of the truth which each of us ought to complete, be it the will to create new signs so that the saving word may remain visible in the world.”<sup>101</sup> The concrete sign is something to seek out in its deeper significance. The eucharistic liturgy is an example of a sign that is a sign of faith.<sup>102</sup>

I have now described how sign may change from being “sign in general” to be “Christ, the sign of God,” and “Church as the sign of Christ.” Sign as seen in the light of Vatican II may be characterised by a renewal of the theology of signs in its personalisation, historicisation and purpose. Based on these contributions of Vatican II, Christ is identified as the *sign* of revelation, and the Church as the sacrament or sign of the union between God and humankind.<sup>103</sup> I have mentioned that the Church Fathers did not develop a general theology of the sacraments, but referred to individual sacraments such as baptism and Eucharist. Sacraments are visible signs referring to something other than their visible exterior. This something other is an invisible reality (*res*). The bread at the Eucharist is an outer sign perceived by the senses, but it is foremost the word used in the sacrament that transforms the element into a sacrament. Sacraments can be named *visible words*.<sup>104</sup> The bread, the visible sign, becomes transformed into the sacrament with the special word uttered through the

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<sup>99</sup> See Fisichella, “Semeiology I”, in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, 988.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Emminghaus, *The Eucharist*, xiv. “Like all the sacramental signs, the eucharistic liturgy is a sign of faith.”

<sup>103</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

<sup>104</sup> See Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, 50.



Church, the Church's word of faith.

### *Symbol*

The word symbol comes from the Greek *symballein*, which means to “throw together.”<sup>105</sup> This is illustrated in the original term that refers back to the use of dividing a coin between two parties. Half a coin has no value, but when it is joined together, it has the value of symbol. This coming together is expressed by Louis-Marie Chauvet as a social aspect, and this is important because the symbol is a contract between the partners, and therefore is the “*expression of a social pact based on mutual recognition* and, hence, is a *mediator of identity*.”<sup>106</sup> Saying this, Chauvet emphasises that this relation is expressed in the fact that half a coin may signify whatever a person imagines it to do, yet when the two parts of the coin connect together the symbolic power is recognised as the same contract that was once established between the two partners in the contract.<sup>107</sup> The social pact that was based on mutual recognition is, according to Chauvet, a “mediator of identity.”<sup>108</sup> Sacraments are seen as mediations identifying the subjects as believers, and not as instruments.<sup>109</sup> Chauvet holds that symbol is governed by a different principle. The distinction between “sign” and “symbol” depends on “whether the subjects *as such* are taken into account (in a symbol) or not (in a sign).”<sup>110</sup> Chauvet refers to Ortigues, who describes the distinctive characteristics of the symbol in its difference to sign in the following way:

The symbol does not refer, as does the sign, to something of another order than itself; rather, its function is to introduce us into an order to which it itself belongs, an order presupposed

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<sup>105</sup> Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, 61.

<sup>106</sup> Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan, S.J., and Madeleine Beaumont, Collegeville (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 112.

<sup>107</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> See *ibid.*, 110.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

to be an order of meaning in its radical otherness.<sup>111</sup>

The sign “relates to something other than itself” because it implies “a difference between two orders of relations: the relations of sensible signifiers, and the relations of intelligible signified meanings.”<sup>112</sup>

Power writes that symbols belong to the category of signs because “their whole existence has to do with something other than themselves. Yet a difference exists between signs used for functional and organizational purposes and those which touch on the meaning of things.”<sup>113</sup> However, the distinction between symbol and sign is not as clear as it seems at first.<sup>114</sup> Power discusses multiple possibilities of meaning of the use of symbol in liturgy, and gives as an example “bread,” which “both feeds and gathers.”<sup>115</sup>

In a theological context, one may, according to Fisichella, “find varying views as to what symbol means.”<sup>116</sup> There are linguistic as well as non-linguistic visual symbols, such as kneeling, bread, wine, putting a few drops of water into the wine, and vestments used in the Eucharist. Gary Dorrien holds that symbols are associative and not precise, and this leaves them open to several interpretations.<sup>117</sup> He argues that the openness of symbol both makes it vulnerable to change and makes it transformative. He finds that David Tracy clarifies this by saying: “we find ourselves returning once again to the symbols themselves, to re-experience their transformative possibility anew.”<sup>118</sup> According to Power, the symbolic nature of liturgy makes the symbolic belong to the public forum lived in society and community.<sup>119</sup> Karl Rahner claims that there is an ontology of symbol and he extends this to the entire theology: “Theology

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-13.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>113</sup> Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, 62-63.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>116</sup> Rino Fisichella, “Semeiology” in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, eds René Latourelle and Rino Fisichella (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 991.

<sup>117</sup> See Gary Dorrien, “Symbol” in *New and Enlarged Handbook of Christian Theology*, ed. Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 489.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 492.

<sup>119</sup> See Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, 5.

could not be understood at all, were it not essentially a theology of symbols.”<sup>120</sup> Fisichella brings forward Rahner’s emphasis on *existential symbol* or *real internal symbol*: “The appearance and perceptibility in space, time and history, in which essence, by appearing, shows itself and, by showing itself, becomes present while it forms the appearance, which is truly distinct from itself.”<sup>121</sup> Fisichella explains that there are three aspects of importance in Rahner’s theological interpretation of symbol: (1) “as property of the entity that achieves its own perfection,” (2) “as relationship between two entities,” and (3) “as expression by means of which knowledge and love of the self are brought about.”<sup>122</sup> Fisichella summarises Rahner’s elaboration of symbol “as that which makes present, in its own special way, the saving reality of God.”<sup>123</sup> Another way to put it is to say that a “real symbol” does what it symbolizes.<sup>124</sup>

### *Sign and Symbol in Salvation History*

I have now presented different aspects of sign and symbol. I have mentioned the transformative force in symbol, its relation to culture and community, and placed it in the context of salvation history. I shall now discuss some aspects of the use of sign and symbol in salvation history.

Physical signs and symbols are essential for humans, being at once spirit and body, in order to both express and perceive spiritual realities. Signs and symbols are necessary for communication through language, gestures and actions. The visible creation is the way in which God speaks to human beings. Human beings are given intelligence and can thus

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<sup>120</sup> Fisichella, “Semeiology”, 991. Fisichella refers to K. Rahner’s essay “The Theology of Symbol” in *Theological Investigations*, vol.4. (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966).

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 991. Fisichella refers to K. Rahner’s article in *Kirche und Sakrament* (Freiburg: Herder, 1960), 34.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* Fisichella explains: “The essential symbol is the internal phase of the reality itself, when giving itself and completing itself by means of the sign, while however remaining distinct from it.” He continues, “The entity is thus symbolic per se and expresses itself so as to possess itself; it gives itself to the ‘other’ by coming out of itself and thus retrieves itself through knowledge and love. In a word, ‘symbol is the way of self-knowledge and general rediscovery of self’.”

<sup>124</sup> See Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, 10. Vorgrimler discusses Karl Rahner’s suggestion that a symbol is never in the strict sense a mere pointer. It is always a “real symbol.” Cf. Vorgrimler refers to “On the Theology of Symbols” (1959), in *Schriften zur Theologie* IV, 275-331.

understand the traces of the Creator in the world.<sup>125</sup> The chosen People of God have, as the Old Testament demonstrates on many occasions, received distinctive signs and symbols. Among these are circumcision, anointing and consecration of priests and kings, sacrifices, laying on of hands, and the Jewish Passover feast. In the New Testament, it is clear that Jesus Christ uses signs and symbols. For example, when curing a man blind from birth he spat on the ground and prepared a mixture of mud that he applied to the man's eyes.<sup>126</sup> Jesus also gives meaning to the Old Covenant. The Christian interpretation of the Exodus and Passover, that is, that Christ is the meaning of all these signs, can point to Lk 24:27, where the risen Jesus interprets the Scriptures with reference to himself (cf. Jn 3:14-15). Jesus from Nazareth is the sign of the revelation of God. Moreover, he points to the Father and the Spirit and thus to the mystery of the Trinity.<sup>127</sup>

Human speech has been used to bear witness to the faith, and the use of signs has always been a constituent part of apologetics. Christianity's credibility and its divine origin have been confirmed by the use of signs. The documents of the Church have successively added, and even changed, the use from the extrinsic usage to an intrinsic one.<sup>128</sup> This change is expressed by the encyclical *Qui Pluribus*,<sup>129</sup> *Dei Filius* of Vatican I, then the Vatican II documents *Dei Verbum* and *Lumen Gentium*. The development shows that Christ and the Church are considered to be "the principal signs of the Christian revelation."<sup>130</sup>

I will now turn to the sacrifice of the Eucharist. The eucharistic sacrifice may be said to be the representation and re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

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<sup>125</sup> Cf. Wis 13:1; Rm 1:19; Ac14:7. See also CCC, 1146-1147.

<sup>126</sup> See Jn 9:1-12. Cf. Mk 7:33 (cure of a deaf man).

<sup>127</sup> See Fisichella, "Semeiology", 989.

<sup>128</sup> See *ibid.*, 987.

<sup>129</sup> See *On Faith and Religion*, Encyclical of Pope Pius IX, November 9, 1846.

<sup>130</sup> See Fisichella, "Semeiology", 987.

## *Sacrifice*

Sacrifice is a term that comes from *sacer* and *facio*, which literally means to set something aside for God and therefore something put aside and made holy. Sacrifice is central in the Hebrew Scriptures. The people were those who were called out, *ekklesia*, and in a similar way the Christians are set apart, calling out in order to function in the world. There are different kinds of sacrifices, or ways to set apart what is offered to God. There are communion sacrifices, a portion of God's bounty shared with God,<sup>131</sup> sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving,<sup>132</sup> and offerings for the expiation of sin from the people.<sup>133</sup> Prophets in the Old Testament warned against divorcing the ritual act from righteousness in communal life.<sup>134</sup> Sacrifices were also linked to the making of covenants. An example of this is the covenant between God and Israel at Mount Sinai.<sup>135</sup> From the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C., sacrifices became restricted to the temple at Jerusalem. The main annual sacrificial events were those of the Paschal Lamb at Passover and those of the Day of Atonement.<sup>136</sup>

Sacrifice is also central in the New Testament. The early Christians kept the Jewish heritage from the post-exilic period, and its emphasis on sacrifice as expiation as cleansing and restoring holiness.<sup>137</sup> In the New Testament, Paul writes about God sending his Son as a sacrifice.<sup>138</sup> Jesus Christ accepted sacrifices as such, but warned against sacrifice being abused and distorted.<sup>139</sup> He also connected to the covenant in the Old Testament when he spoke of

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. Lv 3:7.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Lv 4-7.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Am 4-5; Hos 6; Is1; Jr 7.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Ex 13:18; Dt 4:6.

<sup>136</sup> See "Sacrifice" in Livingstone, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 510.

<sup>137</sup> See Daniel M. Bell, Jr., *Sacrifice* in Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price, Eds., *New and Enlarged Handbook of Christian theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 447.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Rm 3:25 refers to Christ as an "expiation". Cf. 1 Cor 5:7: "for Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed." Matthew and Mark have "my blood of the covenant"; in Luke and Paul, Jesus identifies the cup as "the new covenant" in his blood.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Mt 9:13; 12:7; cf. Hos 6:6.

shedding his blood in a New Covenant.<sup>140</sup>

Christ's sacrifice of himself has been interpreted by the Church Fathers as unique because he was (1) a voluntary victim; (2) a victim of infinite value; (3) himself also the priest.<sup>141</sup> This observation is vital, as Christ was both the subject and the object of the sacrifice on the cross, and still is both priest and victim in the eucharistic celebration.

In Vatican II the sacrifice is presented by the Council as a concept of freedom. A sacrifice is freely given. The sacrifice of the Church at Mass is well explained by Jungmann. The self-oblation of the Church takes form at the start of the Mass. This offer is both accepted and sealed at the consecration. The same act both realises the Sacrifice of Christ and that of the Church. This sacrifice of the Church is received by Christ at the consecration, transformed by Christ and offered together with Christ's sacrifice to his Father.<sup>142</sup> In other words, "there is a sacrifice of Christ and a sacrifice of the Church: a sacrifice of Christ which takes in the Church; a sacrifice of the Church which is taken up by Christ."<sup>143</sup> The priest who performs the consecration acts in Christ's name, with Christ's power, and is at the same time "acting on commission" from the Church. The priest has this commission from his ordination, because it is the Church that has appointed him and ordained him as a priest of Christ.<sup>144</sup>

When Jungmann speaks about the Church, he means not only the Church Universal. The priest at the altar represents together with the faithful gathered around him the universal Church at each local eucharistic celebration of the Mass.<sup>145</sup> Jungmann points out that the statement that the faithful offer sacrifice was taken for granted in the more ancient tradition. He refers to the

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<sup>140</sup> Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25.

<sup>141</sup> See "Sacrifice" in Livingston, 510.

<sup>142</sup> See Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum Sollemnia)*, trans. Francis A. Brunner (Benzinger Brothers, New York, 1949), Vol. I, 190. He writes: "The same act which realizes the sacrifice of Christ also realizes the sacrifice of the Church, but with this difference, that the Church's sacrifice begins to take shape from the very start of the Mass and then receives the divine seal and acceptance when at the consecration Christ takes it in hand, and after richly ennobling it, offers it to His heavenly Father as His own."

<sup>143</sup> Journet, *The Mass. The Presence of the Sacrifice of the Cross*, 93.

<sup>144</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, Vol. I, 190-191

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 190. In the texts of Vatican II the local Church (diocese) is also called particular Church.

Roman canon and asserts that “*Plebs tua* explicitly stands in juxtaposition to *servi tui*...”<sup>146</sup> Jungmann finds this announced with complete clarity in the encyclicals of Pope Pius XII.<sup>147</sup> I shall return to this argument on the subject of the sacrifice when I discuss the development of this theme in conciliar and post-conciliar documents.

### ***Real Presence***

The expression “real presence” stems from the time of Urban IV (1195-1264), and was used in his bull that established the feast of *Corpus Domini*.<sup>148</sup> The Council of Trent (1545-63) is the last council that defines dogmas on the Eucharist. Trent’s *Decree on the Eucharist* uses the concept Eucharistic Presence that is synonymous with Real Presence in contemporary theology.<sup>149</sup> The Council also applies the word “species,” meaning appearances, in the same way that it has been used by the Patristic and liturgical tradition, and it does not use the word “accidents.”

At the time of the Council of Trent, the Church considered it essential to emphasise how the change of the species happens. It used the concept “transubstantiation” whose use is called

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<sup>146</sup> See Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, Vol. I, 190.

<sup>147</sup> See *Mystici Corporis* promulgated by Pope Pius XII on 29 June 1943  
<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_29061943\\_mystici-corporis-christi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi_en.html)> [accessed 4 August 2012]; AAS, XXXV (1943), 232 f. ;

Cf. *Mediator Dei*, 80 “It is, therefore, desirable, Venerable Brethren, that all the faithful should be aware that to participate in the eucharistic sacrifice is their chief duty and supreme dignity, and that not in an inert and negligent fashion, giving way to distractions and day-dreaming, but with such earnestness and concentration that they may be united as closely as possible with the High Priest, according to the Apostle, ‘Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.’...” “And together with Him and through Him let them make their oblation, and in union with Him let them offer up themselves.” See also, 75 “The cooperation of the faithful is required so that sinners may be individually purified in the blood of the Lamb. For though, speaking generally, Christ reconciled by His painful death the whole human race with the Father, He wished that all should approach and be drawn to His cross, especially by means of the sacraments and the eucharistic sacrifice, to obtain the salutary fruits produced by Him upon it. Through this active and individual participation, the members of the Mystical Body not only become daily more like their divine Head, but the life flowing from the Head is imparted to the members, so that we can each repeat the words of St. Paul, ‘With Christ I am nailed to the cross: I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.’ We have already explained sufficiently and of set purpose on another occasion, that Jesus Christ ‘when dying on the cross, bestowed upon His Church, as a completely gratuitous gift, the immense treasure of the redemption. But when it is a question of distributing this treasure, He not only commits the work of sanctification to His Immaculate Spouse, but also wishes that, to a certain extent, sanctity should derive from her activity.’”

<sup>148</sup> See Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 202.

<sup>149</sup> See Moloney, *The Eucharist*, 161-162: See also The Decree on the Eucharist in Denzinger, 1635-1661. De reali praesentia Domini is only used in the headings to chapter I.

“convenienter et proprie” and is perfect adapted to the reality in contrast to the notion consubstantiation, used by Luther who did not accept that the substance of the bread and wine was changed into the body and blood of Christ.<sup>150</sup> The use of the words “most appropriate” has been interpreted by theologians to leave a possibility for other ways of describing the change of the bread and wine into the Eucharistic Presence.<sup>151</sup> The Council also confirmed the permanence under the eucharistic species of Christ’s existence.<sup>152</sup> This permanence is explained and highlighted referring to the opposition of Melanchthon.<sup>153</sup>

The eucharistic mystery is further described in *The Decrees on the Mass*.<sup>154</sup> There is a difference between *The Decree on the Eucharist* and *The Decrees on the Mass* in that the first is founded on the teaching of the Fathers and the second is more a work of the Council.<sup>155</sup> It is very clear that the Eucharist is said to be more than just a meal. Trent firmly points out that the Eucharist is a propitiatory offering with the aim of receiving the Grace and mercy of God for all for whom it is carried out.<sup>156</sup> Raymond Moloney notes that the Council does not state where in the Mass the sacrifice is offered.<sup>157</sup> David Power remarks that the Council does not make clear how the propitiation works.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> See Denzinger, “The Decree on the Eucharist”, 1642 (chapter 2), Denzinger, 1651 (canon 1) and 1652 (canon 2).

<sup>151</sup> Moloney, *The Eucharist*, 165. “The absolute commitment of Trent in this canon has to be seen to rest on the notion rather than on the term.” And on transubstantiation [...] but it is not ruled out that in certain circumstances the terms might be used to cover the same dogmatic notion, or even to draw it into a higher synthesis.”

<sup>152</sup> See Denzinger, *The Decree on the Eucharist*, 1643-1644 chapters 5 and 6 and 1654, 1656 and 1657 canons 4, 6 and 7.

<sup>153</sup> Moloney has emphasized this point see *The Eucharist*, 165.

<sup>154</sup> See Denzinger, 1738-60.

<sup>155</sup> See Moloney, *The Eucharist*, 166.

<sup>156</sup> See Denzinger, 1744 chapter 3; 1751 canons 1 and 3; 1753.

<sup>157</sup> See Moloney, *The Eucharist*, 174 note 57. “The phrase ‘in the Mass’ indicates that this propitiatory sacrifice takes place somewhere within the complex of rites known as ‘the Mass.’ The phrase deliberately leaves undecided questions as to where exactly in the Mass this occurs.”

<sup>158</sup> See *ibid.*, 174 note 59 referring to Power, *The Sacrifice We Offer*, “The discussion on how propitiation works is followed closely by Power, since it is so important for contemporary agreed statements on the Eucharist: op. cit. note 54, pp. 42; 121; 123; 131; 172.” Cf. Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 256. Power’s discussion on the doctrine of Trent on the transubstantiation. The Council does not use a philosophical or ontic explanation and does only say that something happens that involves a change in the definitive reality of what is present as a result of the liturgical of sacramental action. There is no philosophical explanation of how this takes place. There is no use of the word *accidentia* for what remains of the bread and wine after the consecration. The Council however gives legitimacy to the use of transubstantiation to refer to the change of bread and wine into the body of Christ.



Another aspect that is not made clear by the Council of Trent, Moloney claims, is the relation of the sacrifice of the cross to the sacrifice of the Mass.<sup>159</sup> What the Council does, he says, is to point out the similarities of the sacrifice of the cross and of the Eucharist: they have the same victims and effects; the difference lies in the manner of offering. The sacrifice of Christ at the cross was an individual offering and was made by Christ giving his own blood, whereas the sacrifice of the Eucharist works through the instrumentality of the priest and is carried out in an unbloody manner.<sup>160</sup>

In recent years, there has been a new discussion as to whom is the subject that is offering the Eucharist. Is it Christ, as high priest and head of the Church? Is the subject the Church as a whole, through Christ? Is the subject the priest as president of the people? Is the subject every faithful person at the celebration, taking part in the sacrifice of Christ and adding the sacrifices of himself or herself? When it comes to the sacrifice of the Eucharist, which is an act, there are two main opposing interpretations, presented by Moloney, of who is the immediate and primary offerer.<sup>161</sup> He interprets that Aquinas holds that Christ is the immediate and primary offerer and the Church has the secondary role of mediation. The key to understanding this is the unity of the sacrifice: every Mass is the one sacrifice of Christ.<sup>162</sup> Scotists, on the other hand, Moloney states, hold that the Mass is the “sacrifice of the Church.” They interpret Christ to be the mediatory offerer of the Mass, and that the Church, “acting on deputation from Our Lord,” is the immediate offerer.<sup>163</sup> Another answer to these questions is given by Vorgrimler:

The invisible reality that is indicated and is present in the sacrament is not simply grace, it is *Christus totus*, the whole Christ composed of head and members in the Holy Spirit, who as the real and active agent in the sacraments causes grace, but in such a manner that the sacraments are always actions of the Church. But since Christ is the one who is really acting in the sacraments, their inner, sacred reality and effect cannot be damaged by unworthy

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<sup>159</sup> See Moloney, *The Eucharist*, 169-170. Cf. Denzinger 1740.

<sup>160</sup> See Denzinger 1740; 1638 chapter 2.

<sup>161</sup> See Moloney, *The Eucharist*, 147.

<sup>162</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> See *ibid.*

ministers.<sup>164</sup>

Yet another answer is given by Vatican II. It uses the royal priesthood of the baptized faithful as the community which, as Church, is “the integral” subject of the liturgical action.<sup>165</sup> Mazza, a professor of the history of liturgy in Milan, holds that “active participation is necessary because the assembly is a celebrant.”<sup>166</sup> I shall return to this issue in more detail below, when I discuss *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

In the next section I shall attend to some of Thomas Aquinas’s teaching on transubstantiation. The reason for this is that his teaching has had a tremendous influence on the Eucharistic theology of the Roman Catholic Church for many generations and has influenced the teaching at Vatican II.

One of the theologians who have treated the Eucharist in recent years is Raymond Moloney. In the book *Problems in Theology: The Eucharist*, he writes that it was not until the time of the Reformation that the dispute occurred about the Eucharist as a sacrifice.<sup>167</sup> He draws the conclusion that this might be due to a lack of systematic discussion in earlier times.<sup>168</sup> Moloney reminds us that in Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa*, the sacrifice is treated in many different articles, permeating the whole text on the sacrament.<sup>169</sup> Aquinas speaks of

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<sup>164</sup> Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, 50. He refers in note 11 to n.2; W. Simonis, *Ecclesia visibilis et invisibilis. Untersuchungen zur Ekklesiologie und Sakramentenlehre in der afrikanischen Tradition von Cyprian bis Augustinus* (Frankfurt: 1970) 103-109: „Christus als der eigentliche Taufspender bei Augustinus.“

<sup>165</sup> See Mazza, *The Celebration of The Eucharist*, 252. Cf. See Mazza’s referens to Y. Congar, “L’Ecclesia’ ou communauté chrétienne, sujet intégral de l’action liturgique, ” in *La liturgie après Vatican II. Bilan, études, prospective* (Unam sanctam 66 ; Paris: Cerf, 1967) 241-82. See *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 48, “... by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also with him, they should learn to offer themselves...;” *Lumen Gentium* 10, “But the faithful, in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the offering of the Eucharist.” Cf. *ST*, II, II, q. 85, a. 4. (Second part of the second part Reply to Objection 3. “The priests offer those sacrifices which are specially directed to the Divine worship, not only for themselves but also for others. But there are other sacrifices, which anyone can offer to God for himself as explained above.”

<sup>166</sup> Mazza, *The Celebration of The Eucharist*, 252.

<sup>167</sup> See Moloney, *The Eucharist*, 140.

<sup>168</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> See *ibid.* “It is scattered through a number of places and really pervades his entire treatment of the sacrament. Those who approach him today, expecting to be met with neat definition and comprehensive speculation on this question, will be disappointed. At times it is hard to be sure of the precise import of what he says, and the force of his argument seems to slip through one’s fingers. The reason for this, I believe, is

metaphysical presence and applies the term “spiritual” to the mode of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist.<sup>170</sup> According to Moloney, both Thomas and Augustine hold that the nature of the sacrifice of the cross is a spiritual sacrifice.<sup>171</sup> Thomas Aquinas writes in the *Summa* that sacraments bring about that which they signify.<sup>172</sup> Moloney explains, “If the Eucharist is the sacramental sign of the sacrifice of the cross, then it must, in some sense, contain that sacrifice and bring its effects about in our own time.”<sup>173</sup> This discussion is engaging because, when it comes to the act of transubstantiation, Aquinas, as Moloney explains, uses understanding (i.e. intellectual categories and not imaginative ones) to explain the presence of Christ in the sacrament as the result of the change.<sup>174</sup> For Aquinas, Christ’s presence in the sacrament is the result of the change, “not its prior condition.” Christ is the endpoint of the change and exists prior to the change as fully individuated.<sup>175</sup> Moloney explains that the presence is the presence of the person of Christ, the “one who suffered,” and “not of the suffering of Christ.”<sup>176</sup> Moloney also states that the presence of Christ after the consecration is *per modum substantiae*, which is, in a spiritual way, analogous to the presence of a soul in the body, and not *per modum quantitatis*, not by way of quantity.<sup>177</sup> A well-known saying by Aquinas that Moloney uses is “in biting the host, I do not bite Christ!”<sup>178</sup> Moloney holds that “change is as much part of the faith as presence.”<sup>179</sup>

There have also been other ways to express presence. One is to use the figural aspect,

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symbolism. Thomas held to the sacramental principle in a way that is no longer ours. This principle is the mainspring of his entire thinking on the Eucharistic sacrifice.”

<sup>170</sup> See *ST*, III, q. 75, a. 1, ad 1 and 4. “Thomas actually applies the term ‘spiritual’ to the mode of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist.” Cf. Chapter 3 on the contributions by Ratzinger’s eucharistic theology in this thesis.

<sup>171</sup> See Moloney, *The Eucharist*, 140.

<sup>172</sup> See *ibid.*, 148 note 6 referring to *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1. And in this sense the sacraments of the New Law are both cause and signs. “Hence, too, is it that, to use the common expression, ‘they effect what they signify.’ From this it is clear that they perfectly fulfil the conditions of a sacrament; being ordained to something sacred, not only as a sign, but also as a cause.”

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>174</sup> See *ibid.*, 143.

<sup>175</sup> See *ibid.*, 144.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>177</sup> See *ibid.*, 143; 144. Moloney underscores that Aquinas maintains that “the accidents exist without a subject, but that the accident of quantity acts as a “quasi-subject” for the rest.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> See *ibid.*, 144, see also note 19, 149.

*figura corporis*, which is used by Tertullian to refer to the sacramental bread. With this he emphasized the reality of Christ's presence. *Figura* is here used in relation to *veritas* or reality. Mazza explains Tertullian's argumentation.<sup>180</sup> The first point is that the body of Christ in its incarnation is called *veritas*, while the eucharistic bread is called *figura*.<sup>181</sup> There is an ontological relationship between these. If *figura* belongs to the real order, so must also *veritas*, i.e. Christ incarnated. *Figura* is a concept used to discuss the sacramental realism of the Eucharist. Mazza writes that the terminology *figura* and *repraesentare* is part of the language of biblical interpretation, and expresses the typology in the Old Testament being fulfilled in the New Testament; the idea being that there are not two phases, but one. *Figura* and *repraesentare* signify the realism of the Eucharist and not a purely symbolic nature. Mazza shows that by using an ontological relationship of participation, the Fathers took over *en bloc* the special terminology of biblical interpretation and used it in liturgy.<sup>182</sup> If the species are the figure of Christ and represent Christ, it is the sacramental presence that is meant and not Christ as present in heaven.

Vatican II adopted the category of *repraesentatio* to address the connection between the eucharistic celebration and the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. It signifies the sacramentality of the bread and wine.<sup>183</sup> The Eucharist *re*-presents the sacrifice of the cross. Instead of the former use of *figura* to describe the sacramental presence, the representation does not describe this presence but the re-presentation of the sacrifice of the Cross. This term has been applied "...to name the eucharistic celebration insofar as it is the Sacrament of the Cross of Christ..."<sup>184</sup> It is never used to describe the Body and Blood of Christ. The use of *repraesentatio* by Vatican II and Trent, even if it is written as the *re*-presentation, is to use a category of presence which Mazza finds ambiguous. He prefers the category of presence to signify sacramentality.

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<sup>180</sup> See Mazza, *The Celebration of The Eucharist*, 119-120.

<sup>181</sup> See *ibid.*, 120.

<sup>182</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> See *ibid.*, 254.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

Furthermore, he reacts against the way in which *memorial* as a saving event is reduced to the category of presence.<sup>185</sup> With the use of *memoria* and *repraesentatio* reduced to the category of *presence*, Mazza finds a lack of understanding of “the typological conception of the Eucharist maintained in the early patristic period and in some passages of the New Testament, especially in Paul and John.” However, as there is no later dogmatic definition than that of Trent, I can see that using memorial as presence, and even as making present, might make us lose the emphasis on the Cross as the saving event.

Vatican II uses the term “memorial” to describe the redemptive work of Christ. This term comes from Odo Casel who found it in theology of the mysteries used by ancient society.<sup>186</sup> The eucharistic rite is seen as a ritual memorial that “renders the historical event operative now.”<sup>187</sup> Mazza reminds us that biblical data has no single sense of the term “memorial.” According to him, the Old Testament uses different concepts of memorial in each book. Moreover, he adds that the cultic use of *zkr* (memorial) in the Old Testament designates the best part of a victim offered to God in remembrance.<sup>188</sup> This is, however, quite different from Jesus’ words at the Last Supper: “Do this in my memory”. The reason is that the Eucharist was not established in order to remind God of human beings. Instead, as Mazza informs, the Eucharist is for men and women to celebrate the memory of Christ.<sup>189</sup> With these comments, Mazza holds that since the sources for the use of the category *zkr* (memorial) do not fit in with the memorial of the Last Supper “it loses the principal ground on which it was chosen.”<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> See *ibid.*, 254. Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48. Another aspect is that *Presence* is expressed as the presence of the Body of Christ. In the documents of Vatican II, at the consecration Christ’s presence is held to be *real* and in different modes already from the start of the Liturgy of the Word, and to continue to be so during the whole Mass. Christ is present in the assembly and in the minister, but at consecration he becomes present in a *sacramental* way under the appearances of bread and wine. This sacramental presence has superiority over the other modes, but all the ways in which Christ is present are real. With this in mind I speak about the sacramental presence when I talk about the changed gifts of bread and wine.

<sup>186</sup> See Mazza, *The Celebration of The Eucharist*, 253; Odo Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship and Other Writings*, ed. B. Neuheuser (Westminster, Md: Newman 1962), 53.

<sup>187</sup> See Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 6.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

Vatican II's emphasis on the Paschal Event balances the sacrificial aspect of the Mass with the celebration of a meal. This is important to note in order not to misunderstand the Vatican II concept of memorial. Gerard Moore informs that In the General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM) the memorial is treated more or less as sacrament, but is also used for sacrifice.<sup>191</sup> The Eucharist is, according to GIRM, the memorial of Christ's sacrifice. This connects then to the early Christian use of the term *mystery*. The Paschal event is made central at Vatican II and, as Moore correctly points out: "Memorial does not mean reenactment, but the sacramental manifestation of the paschal mystery."<sup>192</sup> The General Instruction is familiar with the scriptural language and refers to the Mass as either memorial or sacrament.<sup>193</sup> This is typical of the post-conciliar theology.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed sacramental definitions, symbol, sign, sacrament, sacrifice and real presence in a historical context and theological framework. This is necessary as a basis for my later treatment of these concepts in the interrelationship between the sacrifice, real presence and communion. I intend to discuss the interrelationship between the sacrifice, real presence and communion as an integrated whole, although founded on the centrality of sacrifice. The sacrifice is Christ's sacrifice on the Cross as the salvific element that I shall interpret as being re-presented in the sacrifice of the Eucharist. The theology of the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic Church is built on gradual interpretation and development. In order to discuss my theme, it is necessary to take this development into consideration, especially since the concepts have been used in many different ways during the history of the Church. In the next chapter I shall move onto the development of eucharistic theology during the last fifty

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<sup>191</sup> See Gerard Moore, *Understanding the General Instruction on The Roman Missal*, 108.

<sup>192</sup> See *ibid.*, 111-112.

<sup>193</sup> See *ibid.*, 111.

years. The theology of the Church is based on faith, which is emphasised by Pope Benedict XVI in his choice of celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Vatican II as the year of faith.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL AND THE EUCHARIST – OFFICIAL TEXTS: CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE INTERRELATIONSHIP

#### Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the centrality of sacrifice in the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion in texts of Vatican II and in a range of post-conciliar texts.

I start with the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC). I then give special attention to the post-conciliar developments, in particular the following documents from the pontificate of Paul VI: the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* (1965) and the instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* of the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1967.<sup>194</sup> I then continue with three documents by John Paul II: the Holy Thursday letter *Dominicae Cena* (1980), the encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003), and the apostolic letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine* (2004). Finally, I treat the following documents from the pontificate of Benedict XVI: *Sacramentum Caritatis* (2007) and *Recent Teachings of the Roman Catholic Magisterium* by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In discussing these texts I consider the following questions: what kind of teaching on the Eucharist can be found in the documents of Vatican II? What do the documents actually say about the eucharistic sacrifice? Are there new conceptual aspects that give clarity and depth to the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist? Do the post-conciliar texts reflect the results of various eucharistic theologies predominant during and after Vatican II? My examination of the

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<sup>194</sup> See Sacred Congregation of Rites, “Eucharisticum Mysterium,” in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967): 539-73. Eng. trans. in Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II*, 100-136  
<<http://www.catholicliturgy.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/DocumentContents/Index/2/SubIndex/11/DocumentIndex/338>> [accessed 19 January 2013].



development in the understanding of the eucharistic sacrifice includes whether or not different interpretations of the Eucharist form lines of demarcation and, if so, how they complement each other. Are there unresolved issues? What problems remain to be clarified? How is the Eucharist understood as sacrifice, real presence and communion, and what is the interrelationship between these? I shall place these questions against the background of Vatican II as a whole and in its context of the modern world, and not only in the sixteen documents of the Council.

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) was convoked by Pope John XXIII. It was the twenty-first Ecumenical Council.<sup>195</sup> The aim of the Council was to renew the life of the Roman Catholic Church and bring up to date its teaching, discipline, and organization. The pope's wish was that the Church would become greater in spiritual riches.<sup>196</sup> His main reason for convoking the Council was to render divine salvation accessible to contemporary humanity.<sup>197</sup>

The goal of Vatican II was an enrichment of faith and may be seen as a complement to the dogmatic Council of Trent (1545-1563) in placing the ecclesial centrality of the Eucharist as font and summit of the Church, and as strongly concerned with how to live the doctrines in daily life.<sup>198</sup> A developed ecclesial theology<sup>199</sup> gives new light to the nature of the Church as the mystery of Christ and as Sacrament. The Church is described as a “sacrament of unity”

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<sup>195</sup> See Douglas Bushman's General Introduction to *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, xv. “Theologically and canonically, an ecumenical council is a solemn exercise of the college of the bishop's pastoral office in the universal Church when the council is convoked, presided over and confirmed by the Bishop of Rome.” (Cf. *Lumen Gentium* 22). See also xx. : “To the eyes of faith, the Council's teachings are much more than a merely human attempt to bring the Church up to date. They are the work of the Spirit and a gift of God to the Church of today, containing ‘precisely all that the Spirit says to the churches (cf. Ap 2:29; 3:6; 13:22) with regard to the present phase of the history of salvation.”

<sup>196</sup> See John XXIII, “Address on the occasion of the solemn opening of the Most Holy Council (October 11, 1962).”

<sup>197</sup> See Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI on the Occasion of the International Congress on the theme “The Second Vatican Council in the Pontificate of John Paul II,” the Vatican, 28 October 2008 <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/pont-messages/2008/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20081028\\_tasca\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/pont-messages/2008/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20081028_tasca_en.html)> [accessed 3 August 2012].

<sup>198</sup> See Bushman, *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, xxv.

<sup>199</sup> See citation in Address to the Holy Father John Paul II to the Conference Studying the Implementation of the Second Vatican Council, Sunday, 27 February 2000, “The Council, which has given us a rich ecclesiological doctrine, has organically linked its teaching about the Church with its teaching about man's vocation in Christ”, 8 <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/2000/jan-mar/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20000227\\_vatican-council-ii\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2000/jan-mar/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20000227_vatican-council-ii_en.html)> [accessed 3 August 2012].

(LG1) and as a “universal sacrament of salvation” (LG 48).<sup>200</sup> The relation between the Church as community and the Eucharist as communion is found throughout the documents of Vatican II.<sup>201</sup> The interrelationship between the Eucharist and the Church is very clear; for example, it is said in *Lumen Gentium* 3: “The Church, or, in other words, the kingdom of Christ now present in mystery, grows visibly through the power of God in the world. This inauguration and this growth are both symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of a crucified Jesus...”<sup>202</sup> In this way, Vatican II reminds us that the celebration of the Eucharist is at the centre of the growth of the Church.

The post-conciliar Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* finds it significant that it was the Twelve, the Apostles, that were gathered at the Last Supper, for they “were both the seeds of the new Israel and the beginning of the sacred hierarchy.”<sup>203</sup> By offering them his body and blood at the Last Supper, Christ “mysteriously involved them in the sacrifice which would be completed on Calvary.”<sup>204</sup> This connects the Eucharist with the Last Supper. By analogy with the Old Covenant of Mount Sinai, which was “sealed by sacrifice and the sprinkling of blood,” the Last Supper is the foundation of the People of the New Covenant and the fulfilment of the Old Covenant.<sup>205</sup> This is one way in which the magisterium of the Church establishes the close connection between the Eucharist and the Church as the New People of God.

The focus of this chapter is the place of the Eucharist in the ecclesiology of Vatican II and its interpretation in later texts of the Church. One way to understand the ecclesiology is to

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<sup>200</sup> See also Avery Dulles, “Catholic Ecclesiology Since Vatican II,” Giuseppe Alberigo, and James Provost, eds, Eng. Lang. ed. Marcus Lefebvre, Concilium, *Synod 1985: An Evaluation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd), 1986), 4.

<sup>201</sup> Gerardo J. Békés, O.S.B., “The Eucharist Makes the Church: The Ecclesial Dimension of the Sacrament”, in Latourelle (ed.), *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives: Twenty-Five Years After (1962-1987)*, Vol.2 (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1989), 347.

<sup>202</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 3.

<sup>203</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 21.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*; Ex 24:8.

follow the suggestion that Ratzinger made as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) at the pastoral conference in Aversa (Italy) in 2001.<sup>206</sup> He said that there are two main pillars to the understanding of ecclesiology since Vatican II. The first pillar is the Church as the Body of Christ, with the image as the Mystical Body. The second pillar is the Church as the People of God. Ratzinger comes to synthesize these as “one basic concept”, which is the ecclesiology of communion.<sup>207</sup> Developing this concept further, Ratzinger refers back to the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985. This Synod aimed at evaluating and summing up the results of Vatican II twenty years after the end of the Council. Ratzinger said that even if the Council in itself does not use the word communion as a central point of reference, the synthesis arriving at the Synod was that the ecclesiology of communion might be seen as a synthesis of the Council.<sup>208</sup> In his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* John Paul II agrees with this analysis. He states that the “communio-ecclesiology” was the central and foundational idea of the documents of Vatican II.<sup>209</sup> The origin both of Vatican II and its documents are, according to John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, the response of the Church to the initiative of the Holy Spirit. This response to the Holy Spirit was also expressed in Paul VI’s first encyclical *On the Church* (1964) *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964).<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, “Conference at the opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa (Italy)” 15 September 2001 in *L’Osservatore Romano* English edition no. 4 (23 January 2002), 5-8.

<sup>207</sup> See *ibid.* part III.

<sup>208</sup> See *ibid.*, see also II, *Extraordinary General Assembly, Final Report* (25 November-8 December 1985), part C, The Church as communion, I. <[http://www.saint-mike.org/library/synod\\_bishops/final\\_report1985.html](http://www.saint-mike.org/library/synod_bishops/final_report1985.html)> [accessed 19 January 2013]. The meaning of communion: “The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the Council’s documents. Koinonia/communion, founded on the Sacred Scripture, has been held in great honor in the early Church and in the Oriental Churches to this day. Thus, much was done by the Second Vatican Council so that the Church as communion might be more clearly understood and concretely incorporated into life.”

<sup>209</sup> See *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 34. See also Cf. *Final Report*, II.C.1: *L’Osservatore Romano*, 10 December 1985, 7; See Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 26.

<sup>210</sup> See *Ecclesiam Suam*, Pope Paul VI, August 6 1964  
<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_06081964\\_ecclesiam\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam_en.html)> [accessed 19 January 2013].

### *The Liturgy of the Eucharist Introduced after Vatican II*

The teaching of Vatican II is expressed in its sixteen documents. The Constitution of the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was promulgated on December 4, 1963 and the *Novus Ordo Missae* (new order of the Mass) on April 3, 1969,<sup>211</sup> three days before the publication of the General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM).<sup>212</sup>

According to the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church given by John Paul II 11 October 1992,<sup>213</sup> the Mass is a unity consisting of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.<sup>214</sup> I shall return to this complex unity in my later discussion of the interpretation of the sacrifice of the Mass as gift.<sup>215</sup>

The Eucharistic Liturgy can be described as consisting of four actions: *Taking* – Presentation of Gifts, *Blessing* – Eucharistic Prayer, *Breaking* – Fraction, and *Giving* – Communion.<sup>216</sup> The Mass is the Eucharistic sacrifice, the memorial of the Lord, over which the ordained priest presides and, at the consecration of the bread and wine, acts in the person of Christ.<sup>217</sup> The Sacramental presence of Christ is defined as being substantially and continuously present under the Eucharistic species during and after the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>218</sup> The

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<sup>211</sup> Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 263, note 2. Continuity with the Tridentine Reform was ensured through dialogue with the preceding reform of the Missal (*Missal* of Pius V, 1570). From the latter there was taken over, as a heritage, the intention of returning to the ancient patristic norm: “In setting forth its decrees for the revision of the Order of the Mass, Vatican Council II directed, among other things, that some rites be restored ‘to the vigor they had in the tradition of the Fathers’”[...].

<sup>212</sup> See also Gerard Moore, *Understanding the General Instruction of The Roman Missal* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007).

<sup>213</sup> See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), Pocket Edition (Stratfield, NSW: St. Pauls, 1994), 1346; 1349.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 56; *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 25.

<sup>215</sup> For a deeper analysis, see John F. Baldovin, *Reforming the Liturgy: A Response to the Crisis* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008), 149. “The priority of God’s action/gift in the liturgy is affirmed by the Christian theology of grace, which insists on God’s prior action in saving us.”

<sup>216</sup> See *ibid.*, 146.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 2 (priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are signed with a special character and are conformed to Christ the Priest in such a way that they can act in the person of Christ the Head); 13 (in the person of Christ as ministers of holy things, particularly in the Sacrifice of the Mass ); 5 (that being made sharers by special title in the priesthood of Christ, they might act as his ministers in performing sacred functions); *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 33 (the priest who presides over the assembly in the person of Christ are said in the name of the entire holy people and of all present).

<sup>218</sup> Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7; *Mysterium Fidei*, 35-39; Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Eucharisticum Mysterium* (Instruction on eucharistic worship) 25 May 1967, 9.

sacrifice of the Mass is considered, in Catholic teaching, as the place in which the sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated.<sup>219</sup>

It is in the Eucharistic Prayer, after the epiclesis and the institution narrative, that the consecration is carried out and the sacrifice is made present.<sup>220</sup> It is the offering to the Father in the Holy Spirit of the Spotless Victim, the living and glorious body of Christ, resurrected and present under the species of bread and wine. The faithful “should also learn to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator,”<sup>221</sup> into unity with God and with each other, so that in the end God may be all in all.<sup>222</sup> The Eucharistic Celebration is the Paschal Banquet, the aim of which is the fruitful reception of Christ’s Body and Blood, has a “communitarian” nature. The Mass is highly important as it is, in the words of the liturgy, the work “through which our redemption is accomplished.”<sup>223</sup> The essence of the Church is both human and divine<sup>224</sup>, and “Christ’s faithful, though not of this world are to be light of the world, and to glorify the Father before men.”<sup>225</sup> “For the aim and object of apostolic work the baptized shall come together to praise God and take part in the sacrifice and take part in eating the Lord’s supper.”<sup>226</sup> “[T]he liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font

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<sup>219</sup> Cf. Denzinger, 1940, Ecumenical council of Trent, Session 22, *Doctrina de ss. Missae sacrificio*, 17 September 1562, chapter 1; Paul VI, solemn Profession of Faith, 30 June 1968, 24.

<sup>220</sup> See *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on the Liturgy*, 9. The main elements of the Eucharistic Prayer are: (1) The *thanksgiving*, expressed especially in the Preface. (2) The *acclamation*, by which the whole congregation, joining with the heavenly powers, sings the Sanctus. (3) The *epiclesis*, in which, the Church implores the power of the Holy Spirit that the gifts offered by human hands be consecrated, and that the unblemished sacrificial Victim to be consumed in Communion may be for the salvation of those who will partake of it. (4) The *institution narrative and consecration*. (5) The *anamnesis*, by which the Church, fulfilling the command that she received from Christ the Lord through the Apostles, celebrates the memorial of Christ, recalling especially his blessed Passion, glorious Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven. (6) The *oblation*, by which, in this very memorial, the Church, in particular that gathered here and now, offers the unblemished sacrificial Victim in the Holy Spirit to the Father. (7) The *intercessions*, by which expression is given to the fact that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church. (8) The *concluding doxology*, by which the glorification of God is expressed and which is affirmed and concluded by the people’s acclamation Amen. <<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/roman-missal/general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal/girm-chapter-2.cfm>> [accessed 17 January 2013].

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48; *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 25

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5. The last words are a quotation from 1 Cor 15:28.

<sup>223</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 2, note from the Secret prayer of the ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

<sup>224</sup> See *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>226</sup> See *ibid.*, 10.

from which all her power flows.”<sup>227</sup>

## **Vatican II: *Sacrosanctum Concilium***

### ***Sacrosanctum Concilium***

To demonstrate the importance of Vatican II for eucharistic theology there are three important issues to consider. Firstly, the Council was the first to approve a document on the liturgy. Secondly, other than a change to measures on church discipline between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, the liturgical reform of Vatican II was the first major reform since Trent.<sup>228</sup> Thirdly, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* was the first of the Documents of the Council to be approved by a great majority of the Council Fathers. On 4 December 1963 it was accepted with 2147 yes votes, and only 4 no votes.<sup>229</sup>

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* is the key to understanding Vatican II’s teaching on the Eucharist. The introduction presents a close and organic bond between the renewal of the liturgy and the revitalisation of the whole life of the Church.<sup>230</sup> This is why *The Constitution on the Liturgy* needs to be treated in connection with ecclesiology.<sup>231</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, with its clarification of the role of the universal Church, complements *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, which emphasizes the local church.<sup>232</sup> The Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* is according to Godfried Danneels perhaps the most important doctrinal document of the Council because it points out that the magisterium “only had a mediating function between Scripture, Tradition,

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<sup>227</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.

<sup>228</sup> See Massimo Faggioli, “Quaestio Disputata Sacrosanctum Concilium and the Meaning of Vatican II,” *Theological Studies*, 71 (2010): 439; Massimo Faggioli, *True Reform: Liturgy and Ecclesiology in Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012); Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (New York: Paulist Press 2012). In the twentieth century there was liturgical reform, on a smaller scale but sometimes dramatic, before the Council, notably the revision of the breviary under Pius X and of Holy Week under Pius XII.

<sup>229</sup> See Winfried Haunerland, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 8. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, Sonderausgabe 2009), 1422.

<sup>230</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1; 2.

<sup>231</sup> Bushman, *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, 35.

<sup>232</sup> See *Lumen Gentium*, 2, 19, 22-23, 25, and 28.

and the People of God.”<sup>233</sup> He considers *Dei Verbum* to be the crown of Vatican II. However, what *Sacramentum Concilium* does is to highlight the true nature of the liturgy with the active participation of all the faithful.

The *Sacrosanctum Concilium* has led to major changes in the celebration of the liturgy in the local church as well as an emphasis on collegiality.<sup>234</sup> There are at least three visible expressions of this. The first, and most obvious, is the use of the vernacular, which enabled an understanding of the proper place of laity in the liturgy.<sup>235</sup> There is a new understanding of the liturgy in which all the members are bearers of the liturgy, not only the clergy. The second aspect is the “restoration” of the visibility of the Pascal Mystery.<sup>236</sup> The participation in this mystery is highlighted with the liturgy as the fulfilment of the priesthood of Christ. The different roles in the liturgy of the acts of Christ, the Church and the lay are clarified. The third aspect is the introduction of the Conference of Bishops in 1995, which was a sign of collegiality between bishops.<sup>237</sup>

Massimo Faggioli holds that four principles are necessary for a full understanding of the Council and its relationship to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. These are *ressourcement* (‘return to the sources’), the centrality of *Scripture* and the *Eucharist*, *rapprochement*, and the *implementation* of Vatican II. According to Faggioli, these four principles contribute both to the early and the mature outcome of the Council. His thesis is that the understanding of the *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, as well as the other documents of the Council, is vital for the understanding of the Council itself. It is imperative, he says, to realise that if one document of

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<sup>233</sup> Godfried Danneels, “The Tablet Celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. Vatican II – an unprecedented event, a council like no other.” *The Tablet*, 2 March 2013. The article is from a speech at Southwark Cathedral 26 October 2012.

<sup>234</sup> See *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 8, (Breisgau: Herder, 2006, Sonderausgabe 2009), 1422. (Local Church is the same as the Diocese, my note).

<sup>235</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1: For the liturgy, “through which the work of our redemption is accomplished,” [1] most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church...[...]” Ref. [1] refers to Secret of the ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

<sup>236</sup> *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 1422.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

Vatican II is minimized, all the documents are at the same time minimized.<sup>238</sup> In the next sections I shall discuss the four principles of Faggioli that I believe are the key to understanding *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and Vatican II as a whole.

The first principle is the notion of *ressourcement*, which lies at the foundation of the approach of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. “It is the most powerful source of updating and reform for global Catholicism in the modern world.”<sup>239</sup> Faggioli adds that what he categorizes as the anti-Vatican II new liturgical movement had rightly identified *Sacrosanctum Concilium* as the main target because it is “the most radical instance of the *ressourcement* and the most obviously anti-traditionalist document of the Council.”<sup>240</sup> He insists that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is the document most affected by the *ressourcement* and that it expresses the very essence of the Church.

The second essential principle is the rediscovery of the centrality of both the *Scripture* and the *Eucharist* and their relationship with each another. This was not a new idea, and had already been discussed in the writings of Roncalli (John XXIII) as the relationship between *libro e calice* (book and chalice).<sup>241</sup> This relation is considered essential in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and is evident in the reform of the liturgy. The two parts of the Mass, the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist, became more balanced with the reform of the liturgy and its new emphasis on the liturgy of the Word.<sup>242</sup> The reading of the Word in rites outside the Mass also became more common. However, as the text of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* states, “Nevertheless, the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at

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<sup>238</sup> See Massimo Faggioli, “Quaestio Disputata *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the Meaning of Vatican II,” *Theological Studies*, 71, Nr.2 (June 2010): 437.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 451.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> See *ibid.*, 447; Guiseppe Ruggeri, “Appunti per una theologia in papa Roncalli,” in *Papa Giovanni*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo (Roma: Laterza, 1987) 245-71.

<sup>242</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 9. “The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church. Before men can come to the liturgy they must be called to faith and to conversion: ‘How then are they to call upon him in whom they have not yet believed? But how are they to believe him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear if no one preaches? And how are men to preach unless they be sent? (Rom. 10:14-15).”



the same time it is the font from which all her power flows.”<sup>243</sup> Faggioli warns that calls for a “reform of the reform”, touch the whole essence of Vatican II. He points out that an alteration of worship is reflected in “a rethinking of ecclesiology in a more profound and long-lasting way than the definition of the Church in *Lumen Gentium* does.”<sup>244</sup>

The third principle is the contribution of the development of the ecclesiology that came with the *rapprochement*.<sup>245</sup> This touched the Church from within whilst having great emphasis on the relation of the Church to the outside world. It can be described as “a reconciled and unifying vision of the Church, of Christian life, of the existential condition of the faithful in the world.”<sup>246</sup> An example of a new more positive view of the Church toward the world is found in *Gaudium et Spes*, The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. What is new is the emphasis on dialogue.

The fourth principle that helps in understanding the Council’s hermeneutics is that the two principles of the *ressourcement* and *rapprochement* require the full implementation of Vatican II with an “unambiguous appraisal of the issue of the continuity and discontinuity and the role of liturgical form in the Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>247</sup>

Some objections to Faggioli that may be considered are that traditionalist criticisms of the Council are mostly levelled at *Dignitatis Humanae* (on religious liberty), *Gaudium et Spes* ( on the Church in the modern world) and to a lesser extent *Nostra Aetate* (on other religions). The teaching of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is largely a development on Pius XII’s *Mediator Dei*, and its principles are not really controversial. Some traditionalists have criticized the widespread practical suppression of Latin in the name of “active participation”. However, *Sacrosanctum*

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<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>244</sup> Faggioli, “Quaestio Disputata,” 452.

<sup>245</sup> See *ibid.*, 452. “‘Rapprochement’ – a term used many times by the pioneer of ecumenism and liturgist Lambert Beauduin – is not part of the corpus of Vatican II in a material way, but it belongs fully to the aims of Vatican II.”

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*; Giuseppe Dossetti, *Per una “chiesa eucaristica”: Rilettura della portata dottrinale della Costituzione liturgica del Vaticano II; lezioni del 1965*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Giuseppe Ruggieri (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), 441.

<sup>247</sup> Faggioli, “Quaestio Disputata,” 452.

Concilium's insistence that all lawful rites are of equal dignity and right and must be preserved and fostered, and its equal insistence that the Latin language be retained in the rites of the Latin Church, can be considered to support the liturgical traditionalist position.

Also there might be said that a Mass with long readings, bidding prayers and then the very brief Eucharistic Prayer II could be considered to have too much "liturgy of the Word". Besides, the old Roman liturgy is rich in its readings, especially at penitential times, such as weekdays in Lent, on ember Saturdays, and the Sacred Triduum. Is the fourth principle that Faggioli presents an ideological call to arms, rather than the definition of a fourth hermeneutical principle? What does he mean by "the full implementation of Vatican II?" Does it imply acting on a one-sided interpretation of the Council in line with progressive ideology? My interpretation is that this is not so. This thesis has not as its aim to discuss this in depth, but my impression as a whole from the work on the Eucharist that he presents is not a progressive ideology but a continuation in the tradition of the Church.

Lieven Boeve has among other contributions presented two articles: The first is on lessons from *Dei Verbum* for contemporary theology.<sup>248</sup> In this publication he highlights that the dialogical hermeneutical principles which *Dei Verbum* presents has become part of tradition for the Roman Catholic Church. Then "a reading and a rereading of this tradition requires the same dialogical hermeneutical principles which *Dei Verbum* itself presents and requires."<sup>249</sup> However, its application seems to be ineffective because "the combined efforts of aggiornamento and ressourcement, has itself become questioned."<sup>250</sup> The conclusion that Boeve draws is that the dialogical principle needs safeguarding.<sup>251</sup> A dialogue with the contemporary world corresponds to the dialogical structure of revelation and tradition themselves.<sup>252</sup> Boeve

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<sup>248</sup> Lieven Boeve. "Revelation, Scripture and Tradition: Lessons from Vatican II's Constitution *Dei Verbum* for Contemporary Theology." *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 13, no. 4 (2011): 416-433.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 416.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 431.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 432.

proposes that the theological necessity of the dialogue, which affects the Christian faith in its essence, needs to be accentuated. He suggests a use of the concept “recontextualization.” This helps to avoid the opposition between a progressive and a conservative reading of Vatican II and also to avoid an opposition between the spirit and the letter of the council.<sup>253</sup>

The other publication I am referring to is Boeve’s essay on *Gaudium et Spes* and theological method in a postmodern context.<sup>254</sup> This Pastoral Constitution on the Church has according to Boeve encouraged modern, so-called “progressive” theologians and church leaders to continue the Council’s *aggiornamento*.<sup>255</sup> He finds *Gaudium et Spes* as “the Catalyst of Modern Catholic theology.”<sup>256</sup> Through a thoroughly made study of anti-modern and modern reception of *Gaudium et spes* he has arrived at the serious conclusion that: “Without continuing recontextualization, theology is doomed to repeat a fossilized past (repeating answers given to past contexts), which will result in a withdrawal of the Church from the world.”<sup>257</sup> On the cultural level contemporary (postmodern) context has led to a detraditionalism and the opening up to pluralisation.<sup>258</sup> Boeve finds a double praxis of interruption to be healthy, this happens when “the Christian community lives its commitments and contributes to the recontextualization of its narrative tradition, both retrieving and renewing it for the sake of its contemporaries and future generations.”<sup>259</sup> “Interruption occurs when continuity and discontinuity meet each other, the one not without the other.”<sup>260</sup> Real dialogue and confrontation is the way to move forward because with the particular narrative identity of Christianity, its truth claims, and the living together in difference gives respect to the other and

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<sup>253</sup> For an argumentation for this view see *ibid.*, 433.

<sup>254</sup> Lieven Boeve “Beyond the Modern-Anti-Modern Dilemma: *Gaudium et Spes* and Theological Method in a Postmodern Context,” *Horizons* 34, no. 2 (2007): 292-305.

<sup>255</sup> See *ibid.*, 292.

<sup>256</sup> See *ibid.*, 294.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>258</sup> See *ibid.*, 301.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

from this peace and justice are possible to develop.<sup>261</sup> I find that this last statement is important to consider in the contemporary Western European culture with the plurality of religions especially the fast growing numbers of people belonging to Islam.

### *Approaches to the Interpretation of Sacrosanctum Concilium*

There have been many different approaches to interpret the event of Vatican II. It is worth noting that even before Vatican II took place, Dom Cipriano Vagaggini had already pointed to the need to study the liturgy in the context of sacred history and in relation to the concept of sacrament.<sup>262</sup> These ideas have been important to the development of both *aggiornamento* ('bringing up to date') of the Church, and to her opening towards the modern world. Yves Congar's contribution is his emphasis that ecclesiology had moved forward since Pius XII's *Mediator Dei* (1947), noting that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* needs to be read in the context of all the texts of Vatican II. Faggioli adds that also Pierre-Marie Gy stressed the importance of reading *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in the light of the whole corpus of Vatican II.<sup>263</sup> Both Congar and Gy holds according to Faggioli that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* did not emphasize a balance, but a movement. Vagaggini considers the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* a spark for the renewal of the Catholic Church.<sup>264</sup> Faggioli finds it regrettable that Josef Jungmann did not analyse the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* broadly enough when he stated that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* renewed the concept of the Church (*Erneuerung des Kirchenbegriffes*).<sup>265</sup> Giuseppe Dossetti

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<sup>261</sup> See *ibid.*, 305.

<sup>262</sup> See Faggioli, "Questio Disputata," 440; See Cipriano Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy: A General Treatise on the Theology of the Liturgy* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1976) esp. 3-32.

<sup>263</sup> See *ibid.*, 441.

<sup>264</sup> See *ibid.*, 440. See note 17 referring to Cipriano Vagaggini "Fundamental ideas of the Constitution," in *The Liturgy of Vatican II: A Symposium*, ed. Guilherme Baraúna, English edition ed. Jovian Lang (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1966) 95-129, at 119.

<sup>265</sup> See *ibid.*, 442; Andreas Jungmann, "Kommentar zur Liturgiekonstitution." In *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Konstitutionen, Dekrete, und Erklärungen lateinisch und deutsch Kommentare*, vol. 1 of *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg in B.: Herder, 1966), 10-109.

found in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* “the real ecclesiological heart of the Council.”<sup>266</sup> The Church is to him a eucharistic Church.

On the basis of the Eucharist as the *norma normans* of the Church’s life, Dossetti compared the eucharistic ecclesiology of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* to the juridical aspects of *Lumen Gentium*. He saw in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* not only a chronologically earlier ecclesiology but also its theological priority in the overall corpus of Vatican II.<sup>267</sup>

Having presented approaches to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, I now turn to the results of its ecclesiology. The new eucharistic ecclesiology emphasized the local Church and made active participation in the eucharistic sacrifice possible for all the faithful, the place depending on the place in the hierarchy of the Church. The role of baptism is the ground for participation in its full meaning.

The liturgical reform that began at the end of the Council has been a great gift to the Church.<sup>268</sup> The reform was so precious to Pope Paul VI that he did not entrust the reform to the Congregation of Rites because he felt a resistance to the reform from the leadership of the Congregation. Instead, he gave the responsibility for the implementation to a new office called *Concilium ad exequendam Constitutionem de sacra liturgia*. This office was directly subjected to the pope. The work of this office was dissolved in 1975 and substituted by the current *Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments* expresses the very nature of the Eucharist and its relationship to the Church. The great insight by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was the rediscovery of the Eucharist as an action of Christ and his Body, which is the Church.<sup>269</sup> It explains that the Eucharist is the centre of all the activities of the Church and

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<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, see ref 19 to Giuseppe Dossetti, *Per una “Chiesa eucaristica”* Faggioli comments that Dossetti is still largely unknown to English-speaking theologians, but see Nicholas Lash, *Theology for Pilgrims* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 2008) 263-67; and Alberto Melloni, ed., Giuseppe Dossetti, *Studies on an Italian Reformer* (Zurich: LIT, 2008).

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> See Baldovin, *Reforming the Liturgy*, 3.

<sup>269</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 8. This theme was treated in Pius XII’s 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei*.

the font for all her power.<sup>270</sup> This underscores the Eucharist as the greatest means for sanctification and glorification of God.<sup>271</sup> The aim and object of all apostolic work is “that all shall come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s Supper.”<sup>272</sup>

The place of the lay in the Eucharist is clarified in the constitution. The emphasis made on active participation, *actuosa participatio*, is a rediscovery of a communal experience, regained from the time of the Fathers of the Church, and that affects all the faithful.<sup>273</sup> The Council states that the Church earnestly desires that the faithful take part through good understanding of the rites and prayers. The Church wants everyone to join in the sacred action consciously, devoutly and with full collaboration.<sup>274</sup> The importance of active participation is expressed with the words:

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work.<sup>275</sup>

In this text, it is emphasized that all the faithful, priests and lay, are needed for the Church to derive the true Christian spirit. The pastors are to help the lay in this process.

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* sees the vernacular as one step towards the goal of active participation for the lay and the possibility of full inner and outer participation, but it does not

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<sup>270</sup> See *ibid.*, 10.

<sup>271</sup> See *ibid.* “From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way.”

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>273</sup> See *ibid.*, 30. “To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons and songs, as well as actions, gestures and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times, all should observe a reverent silence...” See also *ibid.*, 14; 19; 21; 27; 35; 41; 50; 79; 113; 114; 121; 124.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

state that it must be applied.<sup>276</sup> However, many episcopal conferences asked for the vernacular, and so on 30 November 1969 (the first Sunday of advent), Pope Paul VI said: “Clearly the most noticeable new departure is that of language. From now on the vernacular, not Latin, will be the principal language of the Mass.”<sup>277</sup> For the last forty years the vernacular language has been predominant in the celebration of the Liturgy.

The participation foreseen by the Council also consists of actions by the faithful giving thanks to God and offering up the Immaculate Victim, the consecrated host, both by the hands of the priest and also with him to God, and the offering of themselves along with the victim.<sup>278</sup>

I now move to a discussion on how, according to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the offering is made. This will be discussed in the context of the Paschal Mystery, the sacramental sacrificial offering of Christ, and sacramental communion.

### *Paschal Mystery*

The ability of the person to give him or herself as an offering comes from baptism, “which makes the person ‘a new creature,’ an adopted son of God, a ‘partaker of the divine nature,’<sup>279</sup> a member of Christ and co-heir with him,<sup>280</sup> and a temple of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>281,282</sup> In *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, baptism is described thus: men and women are “plunged into the paschal mystery of Christ: they die with Him, are buried with Him, and rise with Him; they receive the spirit of adoption as sons ‘in which we cry: Abba, Father’ (Rm 8:15), and thus

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<sup>276</sup> See *ibid.*, 36 c. “Another aspect of the reform of the liturgy is the use of the vernacular. From the beginning it was not the intent of Vatican II to celebrate the whole liturgy in the vernacular. These norms being observed, it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used; their decrees are to be approved, that is, confirmed, by the Apostolic See. And, whenever it seems to be called for, this authority is to consult with bishops of neighbouring regions which have the same language.”

<sup>277</sup> Quoted in Baldovin, *Reforming the Liturgy*, 115.

<sup>278</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48.

<sup>279</sup> 2 Cor 5:17; 2 Pe 1:4; cf. Gal 4:5-7.

<sup>280</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 6:15; 12:27; Rm 8:17.

<sup>281</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 6:19.

<sup>282</sup> CCC, 1265.

become true adorers whom the Father seeks.”<sup>283</sup> From the time of Pentecost, when the disciples received the Holy Spirit and the Church was manifested, she has always come together to celebrate the paschal mystery in which "the victory and triumph of his death are again made present" and “give thanks ‘to God for his unspeakable gift,’ in Christ Jesus ,” and “praise his glory through the power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>284</sup> Vatican II contributed to a new consciousness of the assembly as “Church,” and the assembly as the “integral subject” of the liturgical action.<sup>285</sup>

Vatican II emphasises that it is by the paschal mystery of Christ, i.e. his passion, resurrection from the dead, and the glorious ascension, that humankind was redeemed.<sup>286</sup> “It was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth ‘the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church’”<sup>287</sup> The Church has been reading the scriptures concerning Christ (Luke 24:27), “celebrating the Eucharist in which the victory and triumph of his death are again made present,” and also giving thanks "to God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15) in Christ Jesus, "in praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:12). This is all done in “the power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>288</sup>

In the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the Eucharist is explained as “a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, and a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given.”<sup>289</sup> The constitution adds that “for well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event in their lives; they are given access to the stream of divine grace which flows from the Paschal Mystery of the passion, death, the resurrection of Christ, the font from

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<sup>283</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 6, with reference to John 4:23; cf. Rm 6:4; Eph 2:6; Col 3:1; 2 Tim 2:11.

<sup>284</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 6. Cf. Council of Trent, Session XIII, *Decree on the Holy Eucharist*, c.5.; quoting 2 Cor 9:15; Eph 1:12.

<sup>285</sup> See Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 252.

<sup>286</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 5.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>289</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 47, quoting the hymn *Adoro Te Devote*.



which all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power.”<sup>290</sup> In the next section, I will discuss how the sacrifice of the Mass is carried out, how the offering of the Victim is brought about, and how the sacrifice is fulfilled with the communion.

### *The Sacramental Sacrificial Offering of Christ and Sacramental Communion*

In the following discussion, I shall distinguish between sacrifice and offering. Christ is always the one who makes the sacrifice and at the same time, he is the victim. This is so because Christ, who gave his life on the cross, is both giver and victim.<sup>291</sup> As Christ himself says in John’s Gospel, no one took his life. He gave it freely to the Father in obedience to him (cf. Jn 10:18).<sup>292</sup>

The eucharistic sacrifice is a re-presenting of this sacrifice of the cross in a sacramental way. Christ, priest and victim, makes himself present in a sacramental unbloody manner. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the consecration of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is carried out by the words of Christ using the voice and hands of the ordained priest, and together with the power of the Holy Spirit he becomes present as the Resurrected One.<sup>293</sup> The words of consecration are said by the ministry of the priest, but the one doing the sacrificing is Christ himself. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* explains this mystery in the following way: “Christ is present in the sacrifice of the Mass both under the eucharistic species and in the person of the priest, and he offers himself through the ministry of the priest under the eucharistic species.”<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>291</sup> CCC, 1362-72

<sup>292</sup> The Gospels do not always necessary give the *ipissima verba* of Jesus. John’s Gospel especially seems to be marked by the evangelist’s formulation of what Jesus taught, in an attempt to bring out its significance, understood after Easter.

<sup>293</sup> CCC, 1413.

<sup>294</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7. Cf. The teaching of Benedict XVI in his Oct. 3 2012 *General audience in Rome*.... [...] “God acts through Christ, and we can only act through him and in him...”[...] “It is not the individual – priest or layman – or the group that celebrates the liturgy, but it is primarily God’s action through the Church, which has its own history, its rich tradition and creativity, [...] the reason given for this is that this universality and fundamental openness, which is characteristic of the entire liturgy is one of the reasons why it

The faithful, clergy and laity, are admonished to live a life of prayer so that “the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodily frame. This is why we ask the Lord in the sacrifice of the Mass that, ‘receiving the offering of the spiritual victim,’ he may fashion us for himself ‘as an eternal gift.’”<sup>295</sup> The reception of the spiritual victim is the communion that has the power to change the faithful to be like Christ and it gives the expectation of eternal life.<sup>296</sup> These words on the communion are not as difficult to understand as the offering of the victim.

According to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, in thanksgiving the faithful shall learn to offer the Immaculate Victim together with the priest and with Christ; they also offer themselves.

[...] They should be instructed by God’s word and be nourished at the table of the Lord’s body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.<sup>297</sup>

How is this to be interpreted? The explanation “not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him”, means that the priest is not separated from the faithful, because he is also part of the people of God. The people act together with the celebrant. The people confirm the Action of the priest with the doxology by “the Great Amen.” This Amen is the seal of the people on the great act of worship which Christ and his Church carried out on their behalf.<sup>298</sup> In addition to the participation in the offering of the body of Christ, the faithful offer themselves in an exercising of the common priesthood; they offer themselves to the Father together with Christ as the offering of *Christus Totus*.<sup>299</sup> Every sacrifice of the Eucharist is always the

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cannot be created or amended by the individual community or by experts, but must be faithful to the forms of the universal Church”...<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/audiences/2012/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_aud\\_20121003\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20121003_en.html)> [accessed 3 October 2012].

<sup>295</sup> See *ibid.*, 12, note 32 referring to Secret prayer for Monday of Pentecost Week. “Propitius, Domine, quaesumus, haec dona sanctifica: et, hostiae spiritualis oblatione suscepta, nosmetipsos tibi perface munus aeternum.”

<sup>296</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 12; Cf. 2 Cor 4:10-11.

<sup>297</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48.

<sup>298</sup> Cf. Raymond Moloney, *Our Splendid Eucharist: Reflections on Mass and Sacrament* (Dublin: Veritas, 2003), 47.

<sup>299</sup> It is the sacrifice of the whole Church, the *totus Christus*, who is both head and members as *Augustine* defined it (see *Contra Faustum*, 21, 8: Migne, P.L., XLII, 392).

sacrifice of the whole Church. It is not the sacrifice of the local Church alone because the local Church is always related to the universal Church and the Church on earth is always related to the Triumphant Church in heaven.<sup>300</sup> Pius XII writes “union with Christ in the Body of the Church, a thing which is, as Augustine justly remarks, sublime, mysterious and divine.”<sup>301</sup> Approaching the answer from this point of departure makes it possible to regard the faithful not merely as distinct individuals but only as the People of God.<sup>302</sup> The offering is an offering of praise to God, standing before God’s throne in the name of the Church.<sup>303</sup>

Through his death and resurrection, Christ has saved humankind from the power of Satan and death, and has brought men and women into the kingdom of his Father. The work is accomplished by means of sacrifice and sacraments.<sup>304</sup> Christ is present in the sacraments and he always associates the Church with himself in his work where God is perfectly glorified and men and women are sanctified.<sup>305</sup> The Church and Christ are so close that she is “His beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father.”<sup>306</sup>

I have thus far considered the sacrifice of the Eucharist, the priestly office of Christ, and liturgy as a public worship performed by the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the whole Church, that is, the Head and his members. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* has demonstrated that “every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.”<sup>307</sup> All the faithful are encouraged to come together and praise God in the midst of his Church, to “take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the

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<sup>300</sup> See CCC, 810; 954.

<sup>301</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 67.

<sup>302</sup> See *ibid.* [...] the Apostle says: “He (Christ) is the Head of the Body of the Church,” and the unbroken tradition of the Fathers from the earliest times teaches that the Divine Redeemer and the Society which is His Body form but one mystical person, that is to say to quote Augustine, the whole Christ.”

<sup>303</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 85.

<sup>304</sup> See *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>305</sup> See *ibid.*, 7.

<sup>306</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> See *ibid.*

Lord's supper."<sup>308</sup> The faithful are able to do this by virtue of their royal priesthood.

In order to further discuss the teaching of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, I shall compare it to Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*. Pius XII stated that the Church is united with Christ's sacrifice through the Eucharist. Because of this union, the faithful offer Christ through the priest, who acts in *persona Christi*, the Head of the Church.<sup>309</sup> This teaching is similar to that of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7, where Christ is the subject doing the offering, and 48, in which the faithful add to Christ's sacrifice the offering of themselves. The offer is made not only through the ministry of the priest but also with him. For comparison *Mystici Corporis Christi* 82:

In this act of Sacrifice through the hands of the priest, by whose word alone the Immaculate Lamb is present on the altar, the faithful themselves, united with him in prayer and desire, offer to the Eternal Father a most acceptable victim of praise and propitiation for the needs of the whole Church. And as the Divine Redeemer, when dying on the Cross, offered Himself to the Eternal Father as Head of the whole human race, so "in this clean oblation". He offers to the heavenly Father not only Himself as Head of the Church, but in Himself His mystical members also, since He holds them all, even those who are weak and ailing, in His most loving Heart.<sup>310</sup>

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7:

Christ indeed always associates the Church with Himself in this great work wherein God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified. The Church is His beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father.

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<sup>308</sup> See *ibid.*, 10. Cf. 26, "Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the "sacrament of unity," namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops. Therefore liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it; but they concern the individual members of the Church in different ways, according to their differing rank, office, and actual participation." See also *ibid.*, 55. See especially note 40 stating that the dogmatic principles of the Council of Trent remain intact. See The Council of Trent, Session XXI, July 16, 1562.

<sup>309</sup> Cf. McGuckian, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, 27. Here he refers to Pius XII in *Mediator Dei* explaining that the unbloody immolation at the words of consecration Christ is made present upon the altar in the state of victim and that it is because the priest places the divine victim upon the altar that he offers it to God the Father as an oblation for the Glory of the Blessed Trinity and for the good of the whole Church. In this we see one single act of sacrifice. "On this approach, here is one single act of sacrifice, when the priest offers the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharistic Prayer, and what precedes in the Offertory and what follows in Communion are understood as related to the sacrifice but ancillary to it." See also in *Mediator Dei*, 92 an explanation of how the people participate in the offering. "Now the faithful participate in the oblation, understood in this limited sense, after their own fashion and in a twofold manner, namely, because they not only offer the sacrifice by the hands of the priest, but also, to a certain extent, in union with him. It is by reason of this participation that the offering made by the people is also included in liturgical worship."

<sup>310</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 82.

Rightly, then, the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy the sanctification of the man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs; in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members.

From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.<sup>311</sup>

### *Conclusion*

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* does not provide a new dogmatic teaching on the Eucharist. Rather, it refers back to the Council at Trent, but emphasises the rediscovery of the ancient principle of the relation between Christ and the faithful.<sup>312</sup> Vatican II was in many ways a starting point for more active lay participation in the Eucharist. The assembly is the subject, because Christ is the ultimate subject of the eucharistic celebration, thus associating the Church with himself so that it is through Christ that the Church performs its offering. The connection between the essence of the Church and the Eucharist is very strong.<sup>313</sup> The key to understanding this is that the Eucharist is celebrated in community with the bishop.<sup>314</sup> The ordained priest lends his mouth and his hands to the service of Christ, but Christ is the one performing the consecration, together with the power of the Holy Spirit. Since Vatican II there is a stronger emphasis on the liturgy of the Word, but the liturgy of the Eucharist has retained its focus. Both belong to the one act of the whole Eucharist.

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* highlights the importance of the sacrifice of Christ and the offering that the faithful take part in. The whole liturgy of the Eucharist is directed to the sacrifice. It starts with the presentation of the gifts of bread and wine, often carried up to the altar by lay faithful, but offered at the altar by the priest; the consecration, the offering and the

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<sup>311</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7.

<sup>312</sup> See *ibid.*, 14; 26. This is in continuity with the recent (pre-conciliar) magisterium.

<sup>313</sup> See *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>314</sup> Cf. Ignatius, *Ad Smyrnaeos* 8,1.

communion all emphasize offering. This is because all the offerings are directed to Christ's gift of sacrificing himself as the true sacrifice. In the relationship between the sacrifice, the real presence and the sacramental communion, which together make an integrated whole, the sacrifice is central.

### **Documents by Paul VI: *Mysterium Fidei* and *Eucharisticum Mysterium***

#### ***Mysterium Fidei***

This encyclical speaks of the relation between sacrifice and communion as well as the real presence. It deals both with the doctrine and the cultus of the Holy Eucharist.

#### *Warnings against Misunderstandings*

Vatican II was closed by Pope Paul VI on 8 December 1965, about three months after his proclamation of the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* on 3 September 1965. In this encyclical, Paul VI reaffirms the Council's teaching on the Eucharist, which in turn is based on that of Trent. The encyclical explains that he felt further clarification was needed for reasons of pastoral concern, because of false and disturbing opinions since Vatican II.<sup>315</sup> He explains that the purpose of the encyclical is to further the hope that Vatican II has given rise to and to guard against the results being "reduced to nil through the sowing of the seeds of false opinions."<sup>316</sup> Thus, he adds, "We [= Pope] have decided to use Our apostolic authority and speak Our mind to you on this subject, Venerable Brothers."<sup>317</sup> Paul VI acknowledges that it is "a praiseworthy effort to investigate this lofty Mystery (the Eucharist) and to set forth its inexhaustible riches and to make it more understandable to the men of today", then stressing that "We cannot approve the opinions they [the proponents of the theories he is opposing] set forth, and We

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<sup>315</sup> See *Mysterium Fidei*, 10-12.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

have an obligation to warn about the grave danger that these opinions involve for true faith.”<sup>318</sup> It seems that there is a limit for the study of the Eucharist, that whilst greater clarity of expression always is possible, one must keep the meaning in which doctrinal formulas have been used in the Church.<sup>319</sup>

Paul VI provides the following objections: it is wrong to emphasize sacramental signs in a way that implies that mere symbolism “fully expressed and exhausted the manner of Christ’s presence in this Sacrament.”<sup>320</sup> He also states that it is misleading to speak of “transignification” and “transfinalization” rather than the mystery of transubstantiation as taught by the Council of Trent, i.e. the conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body and the whole substance of the wine into the Blood of Christ.<sup>321</sup> To speak otherwise, writes Paul VI, is to risk the implication “...that Christ Our Lord is no longer present in the consecrated Hosts that remain after the celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass has been completed.”<sup>322</sup> The Pope states that there is a rule of language that the Church has established throughout the centuries. It has been confirmed by the authority of the Councils with the help of the Holy Spirit, and is to be religiously preserved, “and no one may presume to change it at his own pleasure or under the pretext of knowledge.”<sup>323</sup> He refers to Augustine, who reacted against philosophers who “use words freely, and have no fear of offending religious listeners in dealing with subjects that are difficult to understand.”<sup>324</sup> The reason that proper wording is of great importance is that the formulas of Trent “express concepts that are not tied to a certain specific form of human culture, or to a certain level of scientific progress, or to one or another

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<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>319</sup> See *ibid.*, 25. See also the document of the First Vatican Council *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, 4.

<sup>320</sup> See *ibid.*, 40. Paul VI also adds an example of a proper use of symbolism. To say that the Eucharist is a symbol of the unity and charity of the Church is correct. The Eucharist is also a symbol of the one Body of which Christ is the head, i.e. the Church.

<sup>320</sup> See *ibid.*, note 43. Saying this Paul VI repeats the teaching of the Council of Trent *Decree on the Holy Eucharist*, Introduction and c. 2. (*Mysterium Fidei*, 40)

<sup>321</sup> See *Mysterium Fidei*, 11.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 note 10 referring to Augustine, *City of God*, X, 23; PL 41, 300.

theological school.” It is possible that Paul VI directed this formulation against the theology of Schillebeeckx, although no one is mentioned by name, and the formulas that Paul VI refers to “are adapted to all men of all times and all places.”<sup>325</sup> The dogmatic definitions express the real knowledge of the faith as revealed truth adopted by the Church. The formula “transubstantiation” – which expresses precisely the Church’s understanding of revealed truth (the real presence), adopted by an ecumenical Council in its dogmatic statements and maintained in the ordinary magisterium, thereby imposes itself. If it is impossible to abandon the term transubstantiation this does not contradict an urgency to consider how to explain the specificity of this teaching on the Eucharist in a spirit of “aggiornamento” reaching out to a multicultural society.

### *Active Participation of the Faithful*

In *Mysterium Fidei*, Paul VI also speaks of the restoration of the sacred liturgy, including instruction for the faithful to participate actively in the celebration of the Most Holy Mystery and “to offer it to God along with the priest as a sacrifice for their own salvation and that of the whole world, and to use it as spiritual nourishment.”<sup>326</sup> There is some discussion of sacrifice and communion, how sacrifice is carried out, who offers it, and to whom: “the whole Church plays the role of priest and victim along with Christ, offering the Sacrifice of the Mass and itself completely offered in it.”<sup>327</sup> The reason given for this is that the Fathers of the Church taught this “wondrous doctrine”, but here only Augustine is explicitly referred to.<sup>328</sup> Paul VI does refer to the explanation of Pius XII in *Mediator Dei*, but does not go further into the

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<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>328</sup> See *ibid.* Note 24 refers to Augustine, *City of God*, X, 6. PL 42, 284. Cf. McGuckian, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, 4. McGuckian explains that Augustine understood the whole mystery of salvation as sharing in the universal sacrifice in which the whole community of the redeemed is offered to God by the High Priest.



question, only referring to *Lumen Gentium*,<sup>329</sup> which itself refers back to *Mediator Dei*. In *Mysterium Fidei* no clear explanation is given; Pope Paul VI says only: “We cannot help being filled with an earnest desire to see this teaching explained over and over until it takes deep root in the hearts of the faithful.” There is a reference to Cyril of Jerusalem describing the praxis of worship to the neophytes, using the first person plural:

After the spiritual sacrifice, the un-bloody act of worship, has been completed, we bend over this propitiatory offering and beg God to grant peace to all the Churches, to give harmony to the whole world, to bless our rulers, our soldiers and our companions, to aid the sick and afflicted, and in general to assist all those who stand in need; we pray for all these intentions and we offer this victim for them... and last of all for our deceased holy forefathers and bishops and for all those who have lived among us.<sup>330</sup>

### *Sacrifice, Real Presence and Communion Belong Together*

*Mysterium Fidei* also speaks of communion, highlighting the relation between sacrifice and communion, in accordance with the teachings of Aquinas. The Eucharist is both sacrifice and sacrament. The sacrifice belongs to the essence of the Eucharist, and the sacrament is the partaking in the sacrifice through communion.<sup>331</sup> This partaking in the sacrament follows the sacrifice.<sup>332</sup> The sacrifice is the greater thing and contains the less: participation through the reception of Communion.<sup>333</sup> The Eucharist as “medicine of immortality”<sup>334</sup> is illustrated in the words of Jn 6:55: “The man who eats my flesh and drinks my blood enjoys eternal life, and I

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<sup>329</sup> See *Lumen Gentium*, 11. “It is through the sacraments and the exercise of the virtues that the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community is brought into operation. Incorporated in the Church through baptism, the faithful are destined by the baptismal character for the worship of the Christian religion... Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It. Thus both by reason of the offering and through Holy Communion all take part in this liturgical service, not indeed, all in the same way but each in that way which is proper to himself...”;

<sup>330</sup> *Mysterium Fidei*, 30.

<sup>331</sup> See *ibid.*, 5.

<sup>332</sup> See *ST*, III, q. 82, a. 4. ad 2. “...hence neither in this sacrament does the priest consecrate himself, but he consecrates the bread and wine, in which consecration the sacrament is completed. But the use thereof follows the sacrament...”

<sup>333</sup> See *ST*, III, q. 79, a. 7. ad 1. “Receiving is of the very nature of the sacrament, but offering belongs to the nature of sacrifice: consequently, when one or even several receive the body of Christ, no help accrues to others”.

<sup>334</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, *Ignatius to the Ephesians*, 20, 2. (Hendricson Publishers: Peabody, Massachusetts, [1885], reprint 1995) 85 <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.v.ii.xx.html?highlight=medicine,of,immortality>> [accessed 26 February 2013]

will raise him up on the last day.”<sup>335</sup> Paul VI wishes that the faithful receive Communion daily.<sup>336</sup> This gives daily cleansing from sin.<sup>337</sup> However, Pope Paul VI points out that it is the re-enactment of the sacrifice of the Cross that is the core of the eucharistic doctrine.<sup>338</sup> Mass brings “a rich and abundant treasure of special graces”, but “this same abundance of graces is not gained through mere reception of Holy Communion.”<sup>339</sup> The sacrifice and the Sacrament of the Eucharist cannot be separated from each other as they belong to the same mystery. It is during the consecration that the Lord becomes sacramentally present: immolated in an unbloody way and re-presenting the sacrifice of the Cross, he applies his salvific power and becomes spiritual food for communion.<sup>340</sup> Christ is said to be present in the Church in a sublime manner as she offers the Sacrifice of the Mass in His name.<sup>341</sup> It is emphasized that the “real” presence of Christ is substantial and “through it Christ becomes present whole and entire, God and Man,”<sup>342</sup> It is wrong, says Paul VI, to limit this manner of presence to a “pneumatic” nature, to symbolism, or to say that it is only an efficacious sign “of the spiritual presence of Christ and His intimate union with the faithful, the members of His Mystical Body.”<sup>343</sup> The real presence that is received in Communion is also called “supersubstantial” bread.<sup>344</sup>

### *Transubstantiation and Presence*

Paul VI sets out to explain the presence of Christ through transubstantiation. It is through the greatest miracle “of this kind” that Christ becomes present in the eucharistic Sacrament,

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<sup>335</sup> *Mysterium Fidei*, 3.

<sup>336</sup> See *ibid.*, 66.

<sup>337</sup> See *ibid.*, 2; 27.

<sup>338</sup> See *ibid.*, 27.

<sup>339</sup> See *ibid.*, 27.

<sup>340</sup> See *ibid.*, 34.

<sup>341</sup> See *ibid.*, 38.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. See note 42 referring to Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Humani generis*; AAS XLII (1950), 578.

<sup>344</sup> See *ibid.*, 72. Reference is made to Ps 77.25.

through the conversion of the whole bread and the whole wine into Christ's body and blood, "properly called transubstantiation."<sup>345</sup> According to Paul VI, a result of this transubstantiation, it is correct to speak of the species of bread and wine as having a new signification and a new finality. However, this is because they contain a new "reality."<sup>346</sup> The change is not merely on the level of sign or finality: it is ontological. Pope Paul says that "nothing of the bread and wine remains except for the species"; Christ is present, whole and entire in His physical "reality," corporeally present, although not in the manner in which bodies are in a place.<sup>347</sup> This teaching echoes the doctrine of Aquinas, a teaching which it is difficult to surpass, as Paul VI warns:

Our Predecessor of happy memory, Pius XII, recalled the bounds beyond which those who were carrying on subtle discussion of the mystery of transubstantiation might not pass; and We Ourselves, at the National Eucharistic Congress that was recently celebrated at Pisa, bore open and solemn witness to the faith of the Church, in fulfillment of Our apostolic duty.<sup>348</sup>

Paul VI also calls to mind the patristic use of the term "traselementize."<sup>349</sup>

The encyclical describes another aspect of the Eucharist as being highly important: the praxis of the faithful in fostering a "social" love in which the faithful learn to place the common good ahead of private good.<sup>350</sup> The result of performing the sacrifice along with Christ needs to take deep root in the faithful, giving them an earnest desire for a total and generous offering of themselves "to the service of the Divine Majesty." Paul VI puts a strong emphasis on the adoration of the Eucharist, which is connected to the restoration of the liturgy.<sup>351</sup> Paul VI hopes that the restoration of the liturgy will have abundant fruit in the form of eucharistic devotion, and that this sign of piety may invite "all Christians to a unity of faith and love and drawing them to it gently, through the action of divine grace." Adoration belongs to the fullness

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<sup>345</sup> See *ibid.*, 46. Cf. Council of Trent, *Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist*, c. 4 and canon 2.

<sup>346</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>347</sup> What Paul VI refers to is the sacramental form of Christ.

<sup>348</sup> *Mysterium Fidei*, 54.

<sup>349</sup> See *ibid.*, 47.

<sup>350</sup> See *ibid.*, 69.

<sup>351</sup> See *ibid.*, 6-8 in these paragraphs the restoration of the Liturgy is linked to eucharistic devotion.

of the mystery of the Eucharist.<sup>352</sup> This teaching is not new, but has been emphasized earlier.<sup>353</sup> By the worship of “latria,” which may be given to God alone, Christ may be paid homage and thanked for his gift, especially in the feast of Corpus Christi, (an instance of latria).<sup>354</sup> Why this aspect is singled out in this discussion will become clear in the following section, where I will discuss the Instruction *Eucharisticum Mystrium*. This document connects adoration with sacrifice, which implying the real presence, touches the relationship among the sacrifice, real presence and communion.

### *Conclusion*

There have been different evaluations of *Mysterium Fidei*. The intent of the encyclical was mainly to condemn misinterpretations of the eucharistic sacrifice, sacramental presence and communion. I read this encyclical as being centred on the sacrifice as interpreted at Trent. At the time of the encyclical, there was a prevalent movement among theologians that became even more apparent at the end of Vatican II, and obvious by the time of the promulgation of *Mysterium Fidei*. There were those who wanted to keep an emphasis on sacramental objectivity, and others with a more existential-phenomenological approach to the Eucharist. Joseph Powers holds that Paul VI keeps a middle way and gives a balanced view that encapsulates all the dimensions of the Eucharist into a well-focused unity.<sup>355</sup> I find that the encyclical repeats much of the teaching from Vatican II in a condensed way, but does not provide a clear enough rule of when and how the Tradition of the Church and of the Fathers may be formulated in new ways.

The following points of doctrine in the encyclical confirm my thesis: (1) The eucharistic sacrifice is the enactment of the sacrifice of the Cross. This is the core of eucharistic doctrine.

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<sup>352</sup> See *Mysterium Fidei*, 3.

<sup>353</sup> See *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5.

<sup>354</sup> See *Mysterium Fidei*, 63.

<sup>355</sup> See Joseph Powers, *Eucharistic Theology* (London: Burns & Oates 1968), 8.

(2) The consecration is the moment at which Christ becomes immolated in an unbloody way and is sacramentally present, thus becoming spiritual food for communion. (3) The sacrifice belongs to the essence of the Eucharist and the sacrament of the Eucharist is partaking through Communion. (4) The Church offers the sacrifice in Christ's name. The result of performing the sacrifice is that Christ transforms the partakers as well as the bread and wine. He grants forgiveness of venial sins through Communion, and this makes it possible for the faithful to offer themselves to the service of God.

These four points confirm my thesis that the Eucharist is one action, to which the sacrifice and offering are central.

### ***Eucharisticum Mysterium***

*Eucharisticum Mysterium*, an instruction on Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, was given by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on May 25, 1967. It aims at clarifying the teachings on the Eucharist. It is immediately evident that much of the teaching is a summary of Vatican II and the preceding acts of the magisterium. Thus it is one of the most important documents on the Eucharist for my study of the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion.

### ***The General Aim of Eucharisticum Mysterium***

The instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* consists of an introduction and three parts. In Part I, some general principles on the mystery of the Eucharist are discussed; in Part II the celebration of the memorial of the Lord is explained; in Part III the worship of the Eucharist as a permanent sacrament is described. Among the recent documents of the Church explained in the instruction, foremost is *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, which highlights the nature and importance

of the Eucharist,<sup>356</sup> the full and active participation of the faithful in the sacrifice of the Mass,<sup>357</sup> and Communion under both kinds.<sup>358</sup> *Eucharisticum Mysterium* also takes account of *Lumen Gentium*, the Constitution on the Church, which treats the connection between the Eucharist and the mystery of the Church.<sup>359</sup> *Mysterium Fidei* is also considered, especially in respect to the different notions of presence and the exclusive sacramental presence.<sup>360</sup> Moreover, the reason for adoration of the sacred species is explained.<sup>361</sup>

The purpose of the rules in *Eucharisticum Mysterium* is both to give information on how to instruct the people about the Eucharist, and “to make readily intelligible the signs by which the Eucharist is celebrated as the memorial of the Lord and worshipped as a permanent sacrament in the Church.”<sup>362</sup> Like other sacraments, the Eucharist is the symbol of a sacred reality and the visible form of an invisible grace.<sup>363</sup> As the instruction points out, the more intelligible the signs, the more surely and effectively they will “enter into the minds and lives of the faithful.”<sup>364</sup> This instruction thus proposes an approach to the Eucharist, and explains the signs of its reality. The principal point made in the recent documents of the Church is that the Mass is at the same time and inseparably:

A sacrifice in which the Sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated;

A memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, who said "do this in memory of me" (Lk 22:19);

A sacred banquet in which, through the communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the

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<sup>356</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1; 41; 47.

<sup>357</sup> See *ibid.*, 48-54; 56.

<sup>358</sup> See *ibid.*, 55. “The dogmatic principles which were laid down by the Council of Trent remaining intact, communion under both kinds may be granted when the bishops think fit, not only to clerics and religious, but also to the laity, in cases to be determined by the Apostolic See, as, for instance, to the newly ordained in the Mass of their sacred ordination, to the newly professed in the Mass of their religious profession, and to the newly baptized in the Mass which follows their baptism.”

<sup>359</sup> See *Lumen Gentium*, 3; 7; 11; 26; 28; 50.

<sup>360</sup> See *Mysterium Fidei*, 34-55.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-62.

<sup>362</sup> *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 4.

<sup>363</sup> Cf. Council of Trent, Session XIII, Decree on the Eucharist, Chap. 3, Denzinger, 1639. See also St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* III, q. 60, a. 1.

<sup>364</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 33, and 59.

People of God share the benefits of the Paschal Sacrifice, renew the New Covenant which God has made with man once for all through the Blood of Christ, and, in faith and hope, foreshadow and anticipate the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of the Father, proclaiming the Lord's death "till His coming."<sup>365</sup>

The instruction emphasizes the importance of keeping together these teachings and interpreting them as an ensemble. The goal it proposes is the pursuit of both the knowledge of the Eucharist and the holiness of life that the Council desired. In doing this, the instruction brings to the fore the connection between the Eucharist and the Church, and the action of the sacrifice of the Mass, including a discussion of the importance of latria (adoration).<sup>366</sup> Communion and its connection to sacrifice are also discussed.<sup>367</sup>

Beginning with an evaluation of the connection between the Eucharist and the Church, I will now move to the sacrifice of the Mass. Finally, I will consider the relation between the sacrifice and communion. The active participation of the faithful, i.e. the minister and the laity, will be examined in some detail.

### *The Eucharist and the Church*

The relation between the Eucharist and the Church is a recurrent theme in the texts of Vatican II and post-conciliar documents. *Eucharisticum Mysterium* selects some key points of the earlier texts and explains them further, thus providing a more comprehensive treatment. First, it states that the Son of God took on human nature and redeemed mankind, making them a new

<sup>365</sup> *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 3.a. Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 6, 10, 47, and 106; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 4.

<sup>366</sup> See John F. O'Grady, *Catholic beliefs and traditions*, 2002, page 145. ISBN 0-8091-4047-0, "Latria is a Latin term (from the Greek *latreia*) used in Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic theology to mean adoration, a reverence directed only to the Holy Trinity. Latria carries an emphasis on the internal form of worship, rather than external ceremonies."

<sup>367</sup> See *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 49. "'This worship of adoration has a sound and firm foundation,' [109] especially since faith in the Lord's real presence has as its natural consequence the outward and public manifestation of that belief." And *ibid.*, 50. "When the faithful adore Christ present in the sacrament, they should remember that this presence derives from the sacrifice and has as its purpose both sacramental and spiritual communion."

creation through his own death and resurrection.<sup>368</sup> By giving his Spirit, “he mystically established as his Body His brethren from all nations.”<sup>369</sup> In that body, through the Eucharist, those who believe are joined through the sacrament “in a mysterious yet real way to the Christ who suffered and is glorified.”<sup>370</sup> The eucharistic Sacrifice of Christ’s body and blood was instituted at the Last Supper in order to perpetuate the Sacrifice of the Cross until he comes again.<sup>371</sup> This sacrifice is entrusted to the Church, as “a memorial of his death and resurrection, a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal meal in which Christ is eaten, the mind filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory given to us.”<sup>372</sup>

### *The Sacrifice of the Mass*

There is a key difference between the historical Last Supper and the sacramental celebration of the Lord’s Supper: at the Last Supper Christ made the sacrifice (anticipating the sacrifice of the Cross) without acting through a minister, but in the sacrifice of the Mass the action is performed also by the Church. The action “perpetuates in an unbloody manner the sacrifice of the Cross through the ministry of the priest.”<sup>373</sup> The Church “performs together with Christ the role of priest and victim.” The Church offers Christ to the Father and offers herself at the same time as a complete offering of herself together with Him.<sup>374</sup>

Thus the Church, especially in the great Eucharistic prayer, together with Christ, gives thanks to the Father in the Holy Spirit for all the blessings which He gives to men in creation and especially in the Paschal Mystery, and prays to Him for the coming of His kingdom.<sup>375</sup>

The Mass is always a “single act of worship, though made up of significant parts”,<sup>376</sup> thus

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<sup>368</sup> Cf. Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17).

<sup>369</sup> *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 3. a.

<sup>370</sup> See *Lumen Gentium*, 7.

<sup>371</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 47.

<sup>372</sup> *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, Introduction 3. a. see also *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 47.

<sup>373</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 47.

<sup>374</sup> See *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 3. a.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. c.

<sup>376</sup> Gerard Moore, *Understanding the General Instruction of The Mass*, 116.



the liturgy of the Eucharist cannot be celebrated without the liturgy of the Word preceding it. The Mass is one single act.<sup>377</sup> But to the eucharistic mystery in its entirety belongs also “the worship of the sacred elements reserved after Mass in order to extend the grace of the sacrifice.”<sup>378</sup>

The Eucharist is the centre of the life of the Church, both the local Church and the universal Church. The reason is that the Eucharist contains Christ himself, who gives the opportunity of sharing in divine life. The Eucharist is an action of God and human beings. The Eucharist is also a sign of the unity of the Church. This complex action is described as:<sup>379</sup>

He is our Passover and living bread; through his flesh, made living and life giving by the Holy Spirit, he is giving people life and thereby inviting and leading them to offer themselves together with him, as well as their labors and all created things.<sup>380</sup> The eucharist is the effective sign and sublime cause of the sharing in divine life and the unity of the people of God by which the Church exists.<sup>381</sup> It is the summit of both the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and the worship which men offer to Christ and which through him they offer to the Father in the Spirit.<sup>382</sup> Its celebration “is the supreme means by which the faithful come to express in their lives and to manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the true nature of the Church.”<sup>383</sup>

The instruction explains further what happens in the eucharistic sacrifice. Active participation builds on the proper role of the ordained priest and the other participants—the faithful—who together are the holy people of God.<sup>384</sup> This is summarized as follows:<sup>385</sup>

It should be explained that all who gather for the Eucharist are that holy people who, together with the ministers, have a part in the sacred rites. It is the priest alone, insofar as he *acts in the person of Christ*, who consecrates the bread and wine. Nevertheless the active part of the faithful in the Eucharist consists in: *giving thanks* to God as they are mindful of

<sup>377</sup> See *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 10, and *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 56.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. g. and See the treatment of the Mass in the documents already cited; all of them deal with the twofold aspect of the Eucharist: *Presbyterorum ordinis* 5, and 18.

<sup>379</sup> See *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 6.

<sup>380</sup> Cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5.

<sup>381</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 1; Paul VI, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism), 2 and 15

<[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat\\_ii\\_decree\\_19641121\\_unitatis-redintegratio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat_ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html)> [accessed 18 February 2013].

<sup>382</sup> Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.

<sup>383</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2; 41.

<sup>384</sup> See *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 11.

<sup>385</sup> See *ibid.*, 12.

the Lord's passion, death, and resurrection; *offering the spotless victim* not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him; and, through the reception of the body of the Lord, entering into the *Communion* with God and with each other that participation is meant to lead to.<sup>386</sup> For there is a fuller share in the Mass when the people, properly disposed, receive the body of the Lord sacramentally in the Mass itself, out of obedience to his own words: "Take and eat".<sup>387</sup>

The text points out that the communion with Christ is not automatic, even if Christ offered himself for all, his passion and sacrifice "has no effect except in those who are united to Christ's passion by faith and charity . . . Even for these, its benefits are greater or less in proportion to their devotion."<sup>388</sup> Everyone who has participated in the Mass should be "eager to do good works, to please God, and to live in honesty, devoted to the Church, putting into practice what he has learnt, and growing in piety."<sup>389</sup> Then Christians men and women will be witnesses to Christ in the midst of the world.<sup>390</sup> Daily Communion is encouraged<sup>391</sup> and Communion under both kinds is allowed on specific occasions.<sup>392</sup>

### *Communion, Presence and their Connection to Sacrifice*

The instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* clearly holds that Christ begins to be sacramentally present at the immolation, i.e. at the consecration. This is the same moment when he becomes spiritual food for the faithful.<sup>393</sup> Christ's purpose was that the faithful might share in it both "spiritually, by faith and charity, and sacramentally, through the banquet of holy Communion."<sup>394</sup> Communion is always a participation in the offering of Christ of himself to

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<sup>386</sup> See reference to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48; 106.

<sup>387</sup> See reference to *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>388</sup> Cf. *ST III*, q. 79. a.7, ad 2.

<sup>389</sup> *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 13. See also *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5.

<sup>390</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), 43  
<[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_cons\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html)> Promulgated 7 December 1965, [accessed 18 February 2013].

<sup>391</sup> See *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 37.

<sup>392</sup> See *ibid.*, 36.

<sup>393</sup> See *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 3 b.

<sup>394</sup> *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 3 b.

the Father on behalf of humankind.<sup>395</sup> The relation is unbreakable, and it must be so, because Christ's intention was to give himself completely in obedience to the Father.

In the subsection on the eucharistic sacrifice, I have summarized what the instruction teaches on the Sacrifice and what takes place at the consecration. The instruction answers the question of whom the action belongs to, i.e. is it the action of Christ or the action of the Church? The instruction states that it is both the action of Christ and the Church. The constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* teaches that that Christ instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper and perpetuates in an unbloody manner the sacrifice of the Cross.<sup>396</sup> At the Eucharist, he offers himself through the ministry of the priest.<sup>397</sup> But the faithful shall take part in the sacred action with "good understanding", and, "conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration."<sup>398</sup>

### *Conclusion*

*Eucharisticum Mysterium* has contributed greatly to the clarification of many aspects of the sacrifice of the Mass. The active participation of the faithful, which takes place according to the different roles in the hierarchy, has been explained in an understandable way, based on the sacrament of order and the sacrament of baptism.

The relationship between sacrifice, sacramental presence and communion is interpreted

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<sup>395</sup> Cf. *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (1947) 564-566.

<sup>396</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 47. "At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us."

<sup>397</sup> Cf. Denzinger, 1741, Council of Trent, sess. 22, *Decr. de Missa* cap. 1.

<sup>398</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48. "The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all."

as a complex action. The Mass as a single act of worship consists in significant parts: the liturgy of the Word and that of the Eucharist - although the instruction explicitly emphasizes the unity of the Eucharist. It is clearly stated that sacrifice, memorial and communion belong together. *Eucharisticum Mysterium* explains that the sacrifice is an action performed by Christ and the Church together; the Church gives thanks to the Father together with Christ in the Holy Spirit. The priest, acting in *persona Christi*, consecrates the bread and wine, and the faithful offer the spotless victim through the hands of the priest and together with him. The central point is that Christ and the sacrifice are present already from the start of the Mass, whereas the communion takes place later, and makes Christ's presence evident in full force because of the partaking in his life that is the aim of the communion.

I hold that here the centrality of the sacrifice is confirmed. The eucharistic sacrifice is offered by Christ and the Church together, and the Communion is always a participation in the sacrifice.

### **Documents by John Paul II: *Dominicae Cenaе, Ecclesia de Eucharistia, and Mane***

#### ***Nobiscum Domine***

Pope John Paul II, elected in 1978, was strongly committed to the Second Vatican Council and wished to follow the teaching of Pope John XXIII and of Pope Paul VI. John Paul II aimed at:

[...] liturgy in service of new evangelization, recovery of the art of mystagogic catechesis, appreciation for silence, developing a “taste for prayer” through broader use of the Liturgy of the Hours, the exercise of pastoral guidance and discernment in following the norms of the church faithfully and creatively.<sup>399</sup>

The 1970s were very much the completion of the liturgical reform and a time much

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<sup>399</sup> Rita Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2007), 87.

identified with decentralisation, pro-laity, and innovative reforms.<sup>400</sup> This was soon followed by a new attitude of accommodation towards the traditionalist minority,<sup>401</sup> who “grasped better than many advocates for the reform, the theological principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of prayer is the law of belief) for Vatican II.”<sup>402</sup> According to Faggioli the official teaching of the Church changed in a direction that is visible in the 1983 Codex (Canon Law), which lacks an overall reception of Vatican II, especially the liturgical ministry of the deacons and the laity.<sup>403</sup> This, he holds, hindered more than helped *Sacrosanctum Concilium* to consolidate a new role in the life of the Church.<sup>404</sup> A turning point in the reception of Vatican II came in 1984, when John Paul II granted permission for use of the liturgy that pre-dated the Council, the 1962 “Tridentine Mass.”<sup>405</sup> Faggioli assesses that this is important to note because since Vatican II the liturgical movement had become a battlefield in which the paradigm shift that came with the Council had been questioned; for some groups it had gone too far, for other groups not far enough.<sup>406</sup> Questioning the legitimacy of change in the liturgy brought with it questions of the Council itself, because the liturgy is the innermost centre of the Church. John Paul II wanted the Council to be a “compass” for the Church for the twenty-first century.<sup>407</sup> It is interesting to note, says Faggioli, that those who want a “new liturgical reform”, or “a reform of the reform”, want to reverse the elements that have been fully received by the Christian people since Vatican II.<sup>408</sup> John Paul II has reminded the Church of the liturgical reform and the reasons that he has given for holding fast to the teaching of the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*:

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<sup>400</sup> See Massimo Faggioli, *True Reform: Liturgy and Ecclesiology in Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012), 7.

<sup>401</sup> See *ibid.*, 7.

<sup>402</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>403</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>404</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>405</sup> Rita Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 68.

<sup>406</sup> See Massimo Faggioli, *True Reform*, 143.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, 148. Cf. John Paul II, apostolic letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, 57  
<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_20010106\\_novo-millennio-ineunte\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte_en.html)> Promulgated 6 January 2001, [accessed 18 February 2013]

<sup>408</sup> See Massimo Faggioli, *True Reform*, 162.

These are all reasons for holding fast to the teaching of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and to the reforms which it has made possible: “the liturgical renewal is the most visible fruit of the whole work of the Council” [Final Report of the Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 7 December 1985, II, B, b, 1]. For many people the message of the Second Vatican Council has been experienced principally through the liturgical reform.<sup>409</sup>

In order to safeguard the implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, John Paul II authorized two instructions on the liturgy, *Varietates Legitimae* (1994), and *Liturgiam Authenticam* (2001).

John Paul II was concerned with the centrality of the Paschal Mystery. This is expressed in the letter to the bishops *Dominicae Cena* (1980). This letter was followed by *Dies Domini* (1998) the apostolic letter on the importance of keeping the Lord’s Day holy, and then by the apostolic letter on the fortieth anniversary of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Spiritus et Sponsa* (2003). In the encyclical on the Eucharist, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003), John Paul II is concerned with the dark clouds of unacceptable doctrine and practice exemplified by the neglect of homage to the Eucharist. In this he sees a confusion and an “extremely reductive understanding” that is not accepted by the Church. John Paul II is more positive in the apostolic letter inaugurating the year of the (October 2004-October 2005), *Mane Nobiscum Domine* (2004). In this he writes about the mystery of light, the Eucharist as source and manifestation of communion, and principle and plan of the mission of the Church.

In order to evaluate the contributions to eucharistic theology by John Paul II, I have chosen three documents: *Dominicae Cena*, *Eucharistia de Ecclesia*, and *Mane Nobiscum Domine*. These documents pertain to the question of the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion.

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<sup>409</sup> John Paul II, apostolic letter *Vicesimus quintus annus* (On the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Promulgation of the Conciliar Constitution “*Sacrosanctum concilium*” On the Sacred Liturgy, 12

<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_04121988\\_vicesimus-quintus-annus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_04121988_vicesimus-quintus-annus_en.html)> Promulgated 4 December 1988, [accessed 18 February 2013]; Cf. Massimo Faggioli, *True Reform*, 165.

### *Dominicae Cenaе*

The Letter *Dominicae Cenaе* of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II to all the bishops of the Church on the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist was issued in the second year of his pontificate on February 24, 1980. Pope John Paul divides his letter into three parts: 1. The Eucharistic Mystery in the Life of the Church and of the Priest; 2. The Sacred Character of the Eucharist and Sacrifice; and 3. The Two Tables of the Lord and the Common Possession of the Church. All three parts are relevant for my study of the Eucharist, but I shall select those points that directly concern the Eucharist, omitting the rest. The letter does not say much that is new on the theology of sacrifice, real presence and communion, but it does treat the Eucharist taking the ministry of bishop and priest as its point of departure. One aspect which is emphasized is the importance of the priest in giving adoration to the sacrament of the real presence of Christ.

#### *Part One: The Eucharistic Mystery in the Life of the Church and the Priest*

*Dominicae Cenaе* affirms that the Eucharist is the reason for the priesthood, which came into being at the moment of the institution of the Eucharist.<sup>410</sup> It is the eucharistic worship which, as a “life-giving current”, connects the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood with the common priesthood. It is because the priests are entrusted with the Eucharist “for” others that the vertical dimension is presented.<sup>411</sup>

The worship of the Eucharist, in which John Paul II includes both the celebration of the Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, is in the first place directed towards God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. It is also directed to the Son, in the economy of salvation. The Son gave himself when he said: “This is my body given up for you... This is the cup of my blood shed for you...”<sup>412</sup> The liturgical acclamation: “We proclaim your death, Lord

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<sup>410</sup> See *Dominicae Cenaе*, 2.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>412</sup> Cf. Jn 3:15.

Jesus” says John Paul, “takes us back precisely to that moment”, when he “humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”<sup>413</sup> The same holds for the remembrance of Christ’s resurrection and glorification, and the acceptance of his sacrifice by the Father.<sup>414</sup> Adoration, then, Pope John Paul II reminds us, is our “Eucharist,” giving him thanks for the redemptive love with which he loved us to “the end” (see Jn 13:1), enabling us to share in his immortal life.<sup>415</sup> The external action of veneration is true especially for the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ.<sup>416</sup> The worship of adoration, says John Paul II, which is “given therefore to the Trinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, above all accompanies and permeates the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy.”<sup>417</sup> John Paul II exhorts priests to do adoration: “Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love.”<sup>418</sup> It is a place of meeting with the sacramental Christ, and an invitation to reparation not only for personal faults, but also for “the faults and crimes of the world.”<sup>419</sup> John Paul II often returns to this theme.

Repeating the teaching of Vatican II, the Pope says that “just as the Church ‘makes the Eucharist’ so ‘the Eucharist builds up’ the Church.”<sup>420</sup> The Church was founded at the Last Supper and this was the first time for the apostles to enter into sacramental communion with Christ. Intimacy with Christ is the very substance of eucharistic worship. When Communion is received, it is Christ himself who is received; union in him brings about the unity of His Body, which is the Church.<sup>421</sup> The Eucharist is “source and summit.”<sup>422</sup> This free gift is God’s gift of

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<sup>413</sup> Cf. Phil 2:8.

<sup>414</sup> See *Dominicae Cenaе*, 3.

<sup>415</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>416</sup> Was instituted by Urban IV.

<sup>417</sup> See *Dominicae Cenaе*, 3.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>420</sup> See reference to John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (Encyclical Letter), 20

<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_04031979\\_redemptor-hominis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis_en.html)> Promulgated 4 March 1979, [accessed 18 February 2013]; cf. *Lumen gentium*, 11; Paul VI, address at the general audience of September 15, 1965: H. de Lubac, *Meditation sur l’Eglise*, 2 ed., Paris 1963, 129-137.

<sup>421</sup> See *Dominicae Cenaе*, 4.



love, and brings with it also a sign of response from the Church, a response of love.

John Paul II argues that the Eucharist is "a school of active love," because Christ offers himself "equally" to every person.<sup>423</sup> This is fundamental as it helps to understand human and Christian dignity.<sup>424</sup> It is important to note that the Eucharist transforms not only the gifts of bread and wine, but also of the people, and the world that exists in the human heart.<sup>425</sup> John Paul II highlights love as a way to reconciliation. He ends the letter *Dominicae Cenaе* with a humble petition for forgiveness in his own name and in the name of all the bishops for (among other things) abuses in the application of the directives of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>426</sup>

### *Part Two: The Sacred Character of the Eucharist and Sacrifice*

This part is very dense and its goal is to treat the role of the priest in the eucharistic celebration, thus it accordingly has a strong focus on the sacrament of ordination.

The Eucharist is above all a sacrifice, says John Paul II, and repeats the explanations given by other documents of the Church.<sup>427</sup> The sacrifice of the Eucharist is a sacrifice of the Redemption, is a sacrifice of the New Covenant, and is offered by the "Only-begotten Incarnate Word."<sup>428</sup> Through this single sacrifice are the human beings and the world restored to God.<sup>429</sup> The minister of the sacrifice is by power of his ordination an authentic priest, and thus the true and sacrificial act he performs brings creation back to God. This is possible because of a specific identification between the priest and Christ, who is always the principal subject of this

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<sup>422</sup> Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 11; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5; *Christus Dominus*, 30; *Ad Gentes*, 9.

<sup>423</sup> *Dominicae Cenaе*, 7.

<sup>424</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>425</sup> Cf. Col 3:10; *Dominicae Cenaе*, 7. "In this sacrament of bread and wine, of food and drink, everything that is human really undergoes a singular transformation and elevation. Eucharistic worship is not so much worship of the inaccessible transcendence as worship of the divine condescension, and it is also the merciful and redeeming transformation of the world in the human heart."

<sup>426</sup> See *Dominicae Cenaе*, 12.

<sup>427</sup> Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2, 47; *Lumen gentium*, 3 and 28; *Unitatis Redintegratio* 2; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 13; and Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XXII, chap. I and II.

<sup>428</sup> *Dominicae Cenaе*, 9 refers to *Synodus Constantinopolita adversus Sotericum* (January 1156 and May 1157).

<sup>429</sup> See *Dominicae Cenaе*, 9.

sacrifice.<sup>430</sup> The priest never takes the place of Christ. Only Christ's sacrifice has "propitiatory power" before "God the Trinity and the transcendent holiness." The priestly celebrant has a special character and significance when he:

...by confecting the holy Sacrifice and acting "in persona Christi," is sacramentally (and ineffably) brought into that most profound sacredness, and made part of it, spiritually linking with it in turn all those participating in the eucharistic assembly. This sacred rite, which is actuated in different liturgical forms, may lack some secondary elements, but it can in no way lack its essential sacred character and sacramentality, since these are willed by Christ and transmitted and regulated by the Church.<sup>431</sup>

John Paul II shows by his argumentation that both the sacrifice and sacramentality belong to the Church. The sacrifice is somehow linked to the whole assembly, but what exactly is the role of the non-ordained?

John Paul II emphasizes that the act of the presentation of the offerings at the beginning of the eucharistic liturgy has to be remembered during the whole Mass. These offerings of bread and wine are at times brought to the altar via the lay to an altar server and then to the priest, who places them on the altar. The offerings are "brought to fullness at the moment of consecration and of the anamnesis offering, as is demanded by the fundamental value of the moment of the sacrifice."<sup>432</sup> It is important to note how John Paul II links the offerings made at the beginning of the Mass with the sacrifice. He reminds of the words used when the priest presents the offering of the transformed gifts in the third Eucharistic Prayer "that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father." According to John Paul II, "the character of the entire Eucharistic Liturgy and the fullness of its divine and ecclesial content"

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<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, 8. John Paul II writes: "The priest offers the holy Sacrifice in persona Christi; this means more than offering 'in the name of' or 'in place of' Christ. In persona means in specific sacramental identification with 'the eternal High Priest who is the author and principal subject of this sacrifice of His, a sacrifice in which, in truth, nobody can take His place. Only He - only Christ - was able and is always able to be the true and effective 'expiation for our sins and...for the sins of the whole world.'" See Opening Prayer of the Second Votive Mass of the Holy Eucharist: *Missale Romanum*, ed. cit., p. 858; Cf. 1 Jn: 2; cf. *ibid.*, 4:10.

<sup>431</sup> See *Dominicae Cena*, 9.

<sup>432</sup> See *ibid.*

are expressed by these words.<sup>433</sup> The participation in the sacrifice differs between the celebrating priest and the lay faithful. The lay do not confect the sacrifice as the priest does, but by virtue of their common priesthood, they take part by their own spiritual sacrifices.<sup>434</sup> However, the gifts are consecrated by the priest and the species re-present in a sacramentally unbloody manner the propitiatory sacrifice offered by Christ.<sup>435</sup>

What is interesting is the importance John Paul II gives to the unique contributions of the faithful as sacred species. He says:

To this sacrifice, which is renewed in a sacramental form on the altar, the offerings of bread and wine, united with the devotion of the faithful, nevertheless bring their unique contribution, since by means of the consecration by the priest they become sacred species. This is made clear by the way in which the priest acts during the Eucharistic Prayer, especially at the consecration, and when the celebration of the holy Sacrifice and participation in it are accompanied by awareness that “the Teacher is here and is calling for you.”<sup>436</sup>

John Paul II puts emphasis on the participation of the faithful by emphasising the personal encounter with Christ in the eucharistic communion. This call of the Lord to us through His Sacrifice opens our hearts, so that, purified in the mystery of our Redemption, they may be united to Him in Eucharistic Communion, which confers upon participation at Mass a value that is mature, complete and binding on human life.<sup>437</sup> John Paul II also brings up the connection between the personal offering and the union with Christ:

The Church’s intention is that the faithful not only offer the spotless victim but also learn to offer themselves and daily to be drawn into ever more perfect union, through Christ the Mediator, with the Father and with each other, so that at last God may be all in all.<sup>438</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>434</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>435</sup> See *ibid.* John Paul II writes: “Thus, by virtue of the consecration, the species of bread and wine re-present in a sacramental, unbloody manner the bloody propitiatory sacrifice offered by Him on the cross to His Father for the salvation of the world. Indeed, He alone, giving Himself as a propitiatory Victim in an act of supreme surrender and immolation, has reconciled humanity with the Father, solely through His sacrifice, “having cancelled the bond which stood against us.”

<sup>436</sup> See *Dominicae Cenaе*, 9, refers here to Jn 11:28.

<sup>437</sup> *Dominicae Cenaе*, 9.

<sup>438</sup> See *ibid.*, refers here to *Instituto Generalis Missalis Romani*, 55 f.

*Part Three: The Two Tables of the Lord and the Common Possession of the Church.*

John Paul II speaks first of the liturgy of the Word and then of the liturgy of the Eucharist. He notes that the Word of God, the Sacred Scripture, begins to “take new life”<sup>439</sup> after the Second Vatican Council. He urges the bishops not to forget that the Eucharist is “a special possession”<sup>440</sup> belonging to the whole Church. This possession is the greatest gift in the order of grace and of sacrament that Christ has offered and continues to offer.<sup>441</sup> John Paul II holds the Eucharist to be “a common possession of the whole Church as the sacrament of her unity.”<sup>442</sup> Because this is so, the Church has the right to and the obligation to decide everything about the celebration of the Eucharist and its participation. John Paul II adds that these are principles made by the Second Vatican Council, in the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and applied in liturgical books.<sup>443</sup> Even if there is pluralism in the Church, it is vital that the Eucharist is a sign of unity. Every bishop is responsible for the whole Church, which is expressed in the relation between the local Church and the universal Church.<sup>444</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The first part of John Paul’s letter links the priesthood tightly with the Eucharist and the Eucharist with the Church. The Eucharist is “the lifegiving current” for the priesthood. Sacrifice is the origin of the real presence and this relationship is still present in the holy species. Adoration is highlighted as a place to meet the sacramental Christ, to share in immortal life, and an invitation to reparation. Communion is associated with the praxis of love of human beings because it transforms the people and the world.

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<sup>439</sup> See *ibid.*, 10.

<sup>440</sup> See *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>441</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>442</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>443</sup> See *Rituale Romanum: De sacra communione et de cultu Mysteriorum eucharistici extra Missam*, ed. typica, (Apostolic Constitution of Pope Paul V on the Roman Ritual), 1973  
<<http://www.sanciamissa.org/en/resources/books-1962/rituale-romanum/04-the-apostolic-constitution-of-pope-paul-v.html>> [Accessed 18 February 2013].

<sup>444</sup> See *Dominicae Cena*, 12.

John Paul II starts Part 2 with the assertion that the Eucharist is above all a sacrifice. The offerer of the sacrifice is Christ, who is offerer and offered, consecrator and consecrated. The sacrifice is a propitiatory sacrifice, a “consecrated Offering” in which Christ is re-presented at the consecration of bread and wine. At the eucharistic communion the offerings of the faithful are transformed as well as the faithful themselves. The spotless victim is offered to the Father by the faithful and they offer themselves with him.

In Part 3, John Paul II writes that Christ has given the Eucharist to the Church and the whole Church has this gift as “a common possession.” The Apostolic See gives the Church directions for the use of the Eucharist through instructions that emphasize the unity of the whole Church, so that the Eucharist is always celebrated both for the benefit of the local and universal Church.

John Paul II relates the priesthood, the “consecrated offering” and the praxis of love at the communion and names it a “common possession” of the whole Church. This is markedly different from how the eucharistic sacrifice was presented at Trent, but builds on it and develops the teaching of “my sacrifice and yours” found in the Eucharistic Prayer, and firmly places it within the tradition of the Church. There is no sacramental presence without the sacramental sacrifice and the effect is the love that is communicated at the communion. This is a balanced view of the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion. It underscores the unity of the sacramental action at the same time as it declares sacrifice the origin of the whole act.

### ***Ecclesia de Eucharistia***

The Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*,<sup>445</sup> which treats the Eucharist in its relationship to the Church, was promulgated by Pope John Paul II on 17 April 2003.

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<sup>445</sup> See Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 53.

This was a Holy Thursday letter which, for the first time in 25 years, John Paul II chose to direct to all the faithful. This encyclical took the place of the special letter to priests that he had written for the past 24 Holy Thursdays, a feast day regarded as particularly special to priests. Clearly, with this encyclical John Paul had an important message for all the faithful.

It can be found in the last sentence of the introduction: “It is my hope that the present Encyclical Letter will effectively help to banish the dark clouds of unacceptable doctrine and practice, so that the Eucharist will continue to shine forth in all its radiant mystery.” These “dark clouds” are the neglected homage of the Eucharist, in which John Paul II finds a confusion and an “extremely reductive understanding” of the Eucharistic mystery. John Paul II explains this “reductive understanding” thusly:

Stripped of its sacrificial meaning, it [the Eucharist] is celebrated as if it were simply a fraternal banquet. Furthermore, the necessity of the ministerial priesthood, grounded in apostolic succession, is at times obscured and the sacramental nature of the Eucharist is reduced to its mere effectiveness as a form of proclamation. This has led here and there to ecumenical initiatives which, albeit well-intentioned, indulge in Eucharistic practices contrary to the discipline by which the Church expresses her faith. How can we not express profound grief at all this? The Eucharist is too great a gift to tolerate ambiguity and depreciation.<sup>446</sup>

I have pointed out what John Paul II regards as the dark clouds of unacceptable doctrine and practice. With this explanation given, I now move on to what John Paul II regards as a correct teaching on the Eucharist. He emphasizes that both the sacrifice of the Eucharist (*sua enim significatione et vi sacrificii destitutum*) and the sacramental character of the Eucharist must be preserved. He writes that the eucharistic sacrament must not be reduced to an efficient annunciation (*Eucharistiae sacramentalis ad solam nuntiationis efficacitatem redigitur*) because it is a greater mystery that reaches far beyond efficient annunciation. In *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* he thus teaches how it is should be understood. I shall now turn to his teaching in more detail.

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<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

My specific interest is in how John Paul II treats the eucharistic sacrifice, real presence, communion, and their interrelationship. Thus I will omit many other aspects of the encyclical. I shall present my findings under five headings: (1) “*Church of the Eucharist*”; (2) *The Eucharistic Sacrifice*; (3) *Who is Offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice?* (4) *Presence*, and (5) *Communion*.

#### (1) “*Church of the Eucharist*”

The encyclical starts with the words *Ecclesia de Eucharistia vivit*, “the Church lives from the Eucharist.” From these words, it is immediately obvious that the goal of the encyclical is to recapitulate the very heart of the mystery of the Church.<sup>447</sup> In the introduction, John Paul II directs attention to earlier documents of the Church, which he uses as reference points for *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.<sup>448</sup> He confirms the teaching of Vatican II that the eucharistic sacrifice is “the source and summit of the Christian life.”<sup>449</sup> He also explains how the Eucharist becomes this source and summit through the action of the Holy Spirit. He writes: “For the most holy Eucharist contains the Church’s entire spiritual wealth: Christ himself, our passover and living bread. Through his own flesh, now made living and life-giving by the Holy Spirit, he offers life to men.”<sup>450</sup> John Paul II elucidates this further by stating that the Church is born from the paschal mystery.<sup>451</sup> The *Triduum sacrum* contains both the *mysterium paschale* and the *mysterium eucharisticum*.<sup>452</sup>

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<sup>447</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 1.

<sup>448</sup> See *ibid.*, 9. Leo XIII, *Mirae Caritatis* (Encyclical on the Holy Eucharist) <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_28051902\\_mirae-caritatis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_28051902_mirae-caritatis_en.html)> Promulgated 28 May 1902, [accessed 18 February 2013]; *Mediator Dei* of Pius XII (20 November 1947), and *Mysterium Fidei* of Paul VI (3 September 1965). John Paul II writes: “The Second Vatican Council, while not issuing a specific document on the Eucharistic mystery, considered its various aspects throughout its documents, especially the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* and the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.” And lastly, he adds: “I myself, in the first years of my apostolic ministry in the Chair of Peter, wrote the Apostolic Letter *Dominicae Cena* (24 February 1980).”

<sup>449</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 11.

<sup>450</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 1; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5.

<sup>451</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 3.

<sup>452</sup> See *ibid.*, 2.

John Paul II finds a continuation between the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper and the celebration of the Eucharist. It was a great event for him when he celebrated the Eucharist in the Cenacle of Jerusalem during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 for, according to tradition, Jesus celebrated the first Eucharist in that place. John Paul II writes,<sup>453</sup> “The Upper Room was where this most holy Sacrament was instituted.”<sup>454</sup> He explains the significance further: “By the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the Church was born and set out upon the pathways of the world, yet a decisive moment in her taking shape was certainly the institution of the Eucharist in the Upper Room.”<sup>455</sup> The institution is the sacramental anticipation of the coming passion and resurrection, with the shedding of Christ’s blood that started at Gethsemane.<sup>456</sup> John Paul II considers the whole *Triduum paschale* as the foundation of the Church, but that this is “as it were gathered up, foreshadowed and ‘concentrated’ for ever in the gift of the Eucharist.”<sup>457</sup>

It is possible to interpret the arguments by John Paul II that the Church was founded at the Last Supper and yet its birth was at Pentecost as ambivalent. However, his explanation may be seen from the perspective of the mystery of the Church in which the Church is closely knit together with the mystery of the passion, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit.

In the following sections, I will show that John Paul II repeats the official teaching of the Church on sacrifice, real presence and communion, adding to it his own theology.

## (2) *The Eucharistic Sacrifice*

John Paul II connects the sacrifice of the Eucharist firmly to that of the ministerial office. He

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<sup>453</sup> Not all theologians hold that Jesus celebrated the first Eucharist. Some theologians instead argue that Jesus instituted the Eucharist but that he did not celebrate the first Mass. I will return to this point later in my thesis. See Mazza’s discussion on the difference between the Last Supper and the Church’s Eucharist in Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 297. The eucharistic celebration is interpreted as an *imitation* of the Last Supper.

<sup>454</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 2.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>456</sup> See *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.



teaches that the priest is the servant of the Eucharist and that his power to consecrate comes from Christ when he instituted the Eucharist.<sup>458</sup> The Eucharist and the sacrament of Orders, both given to the Church at the Last Supper, are connected as “Gift and Mystery.”<sup>459</sup>

John Paul II also emphasizes the cosmic character of the Mass. It connects the earth and heaven by way of the priestly ministry of the Church in which Christ enters the heavenly kingdom and brings back the redeemed creation to the Creator and Father. When the priest utters the words of the consecration, he lends his mouth and his voice to Christ.<sup>460</sup> John Paul II describes the act of the consecration as follows:

The Son of God became man in order to restore all creation, in one supreme act of praise, to the One who made it from nothing. He, the Eternal High Priest who by the blood of his Cross entered the eternal sanctuary, thus gives back to the Creator and Father all creation redeemed. He does so through the priestly ministry of the Church, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity. Truly this is the *mysterium fidei* which is accomplished in the Eucharist: the world which came forth from the hands of God the Creator now returns to him redeemed by Christ.<sup>461</sup>

John Paul II points out that it is both Christ as a person and his action of giving back all redeemed creation to God the Father that become present at the consecration. The Eucharistic sacrifice is the re-presentation of the sacrifice of the Cross continuing through time in a sacramental way and is not only a reminder of his institution (*non sola est commemoratio, sed sacramentalis repraesentatio*).<sup>462</sup> The gift that Christ makes of himself is *the gift par excellence*, “his person in his sacred humanity, as well as the gift of his saving work.”<sup>463</sup>

According to John Paul II, Christ has given his sacrifice as a gift to the Church, and thus the spiritual sacrifice of the Church is made his own.<sup>464</sup> This explains why the Church has the power to make sacrifice. The Church consists of all the faithful, and thus everyone belonging to

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<sup>458</sup> See *ibid.*, 5, 31.

<sup>459</sup> See *ibid.*, 7.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>462</sup> See *ibid.*, 11.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>464</sup> See *ibid.*, 13.

the Church offers himself or herself when the Church offers itself together with Christ.<sup>465</sup> It is important, however, to differentiate between the sacrifice of the cross that is made once for all and the celebration of its memory (*memoriale sacrificale*), which makes “Christ’s one, definitive redemptive sacrifice always present in time.”<sup>466</sup> This is a mystery of faith, and it is not possible to explain exactly how “The Sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*.”<sup>467</sup> John Paul II refers to John Chrysostom, who teaches:

We always offer the same Lamb, not one today and another tomorrow, but always the same one. For this reason the sacrifice is always only one... Even now we offer that victim who was once offered and who will never be consumed.<sup>468</sup>

The Sacrifice of the Eucharist is called a sacrifice because it is the same sacrifice “made present ever anew”,<sup>469</sup> and it is therefore a sacrifice in the strict sense.<sup>470</sup>

### (3) *Who is Offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice?*

The text confirms that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross always is his own. This holds also when the Church with Christ through the Holy Spirit makes its re-presentation actual in time. John Paul II puts it as follows: “...my eyes have gazed in recollection upon the host and the chalice, where time and space in some way ‘merge’ and the drama of Golgotha is re-presented in a living way, thus revealing its mysterious ‘contemporaneity.’”<sup>471</sup>

In order to discuss John Paul II’s arguments in the letter, I shall follow the process of his

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<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 John Paul II writes: “In giving his sacrifice to the Church, Christ has also made his own the spiritual sacrifice of the Church, which is called to offer herself in union with the sacrifice of Christ. This is the teaching of the Second Vatican Council concerning all the faithful: “Taking part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is the source and summit of the whole Christian life, they offer the divine victim to God, and offer themselves along with it.”; Cf. note 19, *Lumen Gentium*, 11.

<sup>466</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 12.

<sup>467</sup> CCC, 1382.

<sup>468</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 12.

<sup>469</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>470</sup> See *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

argumentation. The consecration of the gifts, he writes, is dependent on priestly ordination<sup>472</sup> for the change of the whole bread into the body of Christ and the whole wine into Christ's blood.<sup>473</sup> The acting *in persona Christi* is thoroughly discussed by John Paul II.<sup>474</sup> He acknowledges the teaching of Pius XII in *Mediator Dei* that *in persona Christi* means an offering in the name of all the faithful.<sup>475</sup> However, John Paul II adds that sacrifice *in persona Christi*:... "means more than offering 'in the name of' or 'in the place of' Christ." "In persona means in specific sacramental identification with the eternal High Priest who is the author and principal subject of this sacrifice of his, a sacrifice in which, in truth, nobody can take his place."<sup>476</sup>

With this, John Paul II concludes that Christ is the principal offerer. He explains further that "through the priestly ministry of the Church, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity"... the world which came forth from the hands of God the Creator now returns to him redeemed by Christ."<sup>477</sup> However, the priest does not act alone. He carries out the eucharistic ministry "...together with the conscious, active and fruitful participation of the faithful in the Eucharist..."<sup>478</sup>

Every community offers the sacrifice through the hands of the consecrated minister.<sup>479</sup> This offering is a joining in the offering "by virtue of their royal priesthood."<sup>480</sup> However, the priest is the one offering the sacrifice to God, because when he acts in the person of Christ, he

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<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 29. John Paul II writes: "The assembly gathered together for the celebration of the Eucharist, if it is to be a truly Eucharistic assembly, absolutely requires the presence of an ordained priest as its president. On the other hand, the community is by itself incapable of providing an ordained minister. This minister is a gift which the assembly receives through episcopal succession going back to the Apostles. It is the Bishop who, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, makes a new presbyter by conferring upon him the power to consecrate the Eucharist. Consequently, the Eucharistic mystery cannot be celebrated in any community except by an ordained priest, as the Fourth Lateran Council expressly taught."

<sup>473</sup> See *ibid.*, 5, 15. I am not discussing the issue of concomitance at this point. See also transubstantiation in The Council of Trent, *Session XIII, Decretum de ss. Eucharistia*, Chapter 4: Denzinger 1642.

<sup>474</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 29. The teaching of *in persona Christi* is according to John Paul II firmly confirmed in the teaching of the Church. Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 10 and 28; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 2.

<sup>475</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 29 note 59.

<sup>476</sup> Cf. *Dominicae Cena*, 8.

<sup>477</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 8.

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>479</sup> See *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>480</sup> See *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 28.

brings the eucharistic sacrifice about and can thus offer it “to God in the name of all the people.”<sup>481</sup>

John Paul II writes that it is Christ (the same victim as on the cross)<sup>482</sup> who offers himself through the ministry of the priest, but at the eucharistic sacrifice the manner is different from that of the Cross.<sup>483</sup> It is always with the help of the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the Church since Pentecost, that the priest can act.<sup>484</sup> John Paul II affirms: “The joint and inseparable activity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, which is at the origin of the Church, of her consolidation and her continued life, is at work in the Eucharist.”<sup>485</sup>

#### (4) *Presence*

Vatican II affirmed five modes of the presence of Christ. He is present in the Word, the action of the Priest/Minister, the assembly, the consecrated bread and wine, and the sacraments.<sup>486</sup> John Paul II reminds the readers of the promise of Christ to remain with Christians until the end of time (Mt 28:20) and that through the bread and wine changed into Christ’s body and blood he is present with “unique intensity”.<sup>487</sup>

John Paul II calls the Eucharist a living sacrament.<sup>488</sup> He argues that in the Eucharist Christ offers himself and gives life to men and women “through his own flesh, now made

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<sup>481</sup> See *ibid.*, and *Lumen Gentium*, 10. John Paul II comments on this: “For this reason, the Roman Missal prescribes that only the priest should recite the Eucharistic Prayer, while the people participate in faith and in silence.”

<sup>482</sup> My note.

<sup>483</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 12 see footnote no. 16; Cf. Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XXII, Doctrina de ss. Missae Sacrificio, Chapter 2: Denzinger 1743. “It is one and the same victim here offering himself by the ministry of his priests, who then offered himself on the Cross; it is only the manner of offering that is different.”

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 27.

<sup>485</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 23, John Paul II writes: “This was clearly evident to the author of the Liturgy of Saint James: in the epiclesis of the Anaphora, God the Father is asked to send the Holy Spirit upon the faithful and upon the offerings, so that the body and blood of Christ “may be a help to all those who partake of it ... for the sanctification of their souls and bodies.”[43] The Church is fortified by the divine Paraclete through the sanctification of the faithful in the Eucharist.” See also note 43 in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 23 referring to *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 26, and 206.

<sup>486</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7; *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 39.

<sup>487</sup> See *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 1.

<sup>488</sup> See *ibid.*, 6.

living and life-giving by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>489</sup> The Eucharist is the most precious gift of the Church because Christ is present there both in the faithful and in its spiritual food.<sup>490</sup> Not only is he present during the Eucharist, but he remains present in the species as long as these remain because the bread and wine have disappeared in their reality (*in ipsa rerum natura*) and Christ remains.<sup>491</sup> This is one reason that John Paul II gives for the worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass. Another reason is that the species are always connected to the sacrifice of the Cross and remain so as long as the species exist.<sup>492</sup> Thus, with Christ and his redeeming action present, it is just to give adoration to him in the eucharistic species. This worship does not diminish the fact that the species originate from the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice and are directed towards sacramental and spiritual communion.<sup>493</sup>

There are also other aspects of presence. John Paul II holds that at every celebration of the Mass there is the presence of the universal Church. He emphasizes the communion of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven, especially at the celebration of the Eucharist, in the following passage:

It is not by chance that the Eastern Anaphoras and the Latin Eucharistic Prayers honour Mary, the ever-Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God, the angels, the holy apostles, the glorious martyrs and all the saints. This is an aspect of the Eucharist which merits greater attention: in celebrating the sacrifice of the Lamb, we are united to the heavenly “liturgy” and become part of that great multitude which cries out: “Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!” (*Rev 7:10*). The Eucharist is truly a glimpse of heaven appearing on earth. It is a glorious ray of the heavenly Jerusalem which pierces the clouds of our history and lights up our journey.<sup>494</sup>

John Paul II was devoted to Mary, and the year of the publication of the letter *Ecclesia de*

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<sup>489</sup> See *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>490</sup> See *ibid.*, 9. See also Denzinger, 1642, The Council of Trent Session XII, *Decretum de ss. Eucharistia*, Chapter 4; Cf. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 11, and 51.

<sup>491</sup> See *ibid.*, 25 and note. 48, cf. Denzinger 1654, Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XIII, *Decretum de ss. Eucharistia*, Canon 4; Cf. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 15. There remains the boundary indicated by Paul VI: “Every theological explanation which seeks some understanding of this mystery, in order to be in accord with Catholic faith, must firmly maintain that in objective reality, independently of our mind, the bread and wine have ceased to exist after the consecration, so that the adorable body and blood of the Lord Jesus from that moment on are really before us under the sacramental species of bread and wine.”

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>493</sup> See *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 25.

<sup>494</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 19.

*Eucharistia* had been dubbed the “Year of the Rosary” (October 2002- October 2003). The new “Mysteries of Light” he introduced to the Rosary are meant to draw attention to the connection between the Church on earth and Mary, the Mother of the Church, in heaven. John Paul II writes:

Above all, *let us listen to Mary Most Holy*, in whom the mystery of the Eucharist appears, more than in anyone else, *as a mystery of light*. Gazing upon Mary, we come to know *the transforming power* present in the Eucharist. In her we see the world renewed in love. Contemplating her, assumed body and soul into heaven, we see opening up before us those “new heavens” and that “new earth” which will appear at the second coming of Christ. Here below, the Eucharist represents their pledge, and in a certain way, their anticipation: “*Veni, Domine Iesu!*” (Rev 22:20).<sup>495</sup>

John Paul II also reminds readers that the sacrifice of the Cross is an on-going action in the sense of the sacramental re-presentation. He states:

Nor does it remain confined to the past, since “all that Christ is – all that he did and suffered for all men – participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times”.<sup>496</sup>

He concludes:

In continuity with the Virgin’s faith, in the Eucharistic mystery we are asked to believe that the same Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, becomes present in his full humanity and divinity (*cum tota humana ac divina existentia*) under the signs of bread and wine.<sup>497</sup>

## (5) *Communion*

The previous section already touched on the notion of communion. The Eucharist is a twofold action: it is God’s action to sanctify the world in Christ, and the worship of God made by the faithful through Christ and in the Spirit.<sup>498</sup> The aim of the Eucharist is the communion of the faithful disciples. It is the bread of life.<sup>499</sup> This bread always represents the body and blood

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<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 See note 9 Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium, 47: “... our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his body and blood, in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout time, until he should return”. (*Salvator noster [...] Sacrificium Eucharisticum Corporis et Sanguinis sui instituit, quo Sacrificium Crucis in saecula, donec veniret, perpetuaret.*)

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*, 55

<sup>498</sup> See *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 16.

<sup>499</sup> See *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 17.

shed on Golgotha.<sup>500</sup>

The approach to the communion that John Paul II makes is to emphasize the Holy Spirit, who is given through the communion in Christ's body and blood.<sup>501</sup> In doing this, he refers to Saint Ephraim and to the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.<sup>502</sup> Furthermore, John Paul II also refers to the Roman Missal, to Eucharistic Prayer III, where the celebrant prays: "grant that we who are nourished by his body and blood may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ." John Paul II then confirms that in communion with the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist the gift of the Spirit grows.<sup>503</sup> The Holy Spirit transforms not only the gifts but also those taking part in them. John Paul II expresses the activity of the Holy Spirit in the following way:

The joint and inseparable activity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, which is at the origin of the Church, of her consolidation and her continued life, is at work in the Eucharist. This was clearly evident to the author of the Liturgy of Saint James: in the epiclesis of the Anaphora, God the Father is asked to send the Holy Spirit upon the faithful and upon the offerings, so that the body and blood of Christ "may be a help to all those who partake of it ... for the sanctification of their souls and bodies".<sup>504</sup>

The Church is fortified by the divine Paraclete through the sanctification of the faithful in the Eucharist.<sup>505</sup> The goal is to conform the partakers of the communion to Christ and aims at a union with him. John Paul II explains: "Through her communion with the body of Christ the Church comes to be ever more profoundly 'in Christ in the nature of a sacrament, that is, a sign and instrument of intimate unity with God and of the unity of the whole human race'".<sup>506</sup> The sacramental communion is incorporation into Christ. This also entails that Christ receives the

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<sup>500</sup> See *ibid.*, 48. "Though the idea of a "banquet" naturally suggests familiarity, the Church has never yielded to the temptation to trivialize this "intimacy" with her Spouse by forgetting that he is also her Lord and that the "banquet" always remains a sacrificial banquet marked by the blood shed on Golgotha."

<sup>501</sup> See *ibid.*, 17.

<sup>502</sup> See *ibid.*, 17.. "In the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, for example, we find the prayer: "We beseech, implore and beg you: send your Holy Spirit upon us all and upon these gifts... that those who partake of them may be purified in soul, receive the forgiveness of their sins, and share in the Holy Spirit."

<sup>503</sup> See *ibid.*, 17.

<sup>504</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, see note 43 referring to *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 26, and 206.

<sup>505</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 23.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*, 24; see also *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

communicants as friends: a relation that works in two directions.<sup>507</sup>

The union with Christ is a union to further the Mission of Christ that has become the Mission of the Church. “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (Jn 20:21). John Paul II repeats the teaching of Vatican II that the Church is a sacrament of Christ who is *Lumen Gentium*:

By its union with Christ, the People of the New Covenant, far from closing in upon themselves, become a “sacrament” for humanity,<sup>508</sup> a sign and instrument of the salvation achieved by Christ, the light of the world and the salt of the earth (cf. Mt 5:13-16), for the redemption of all.<sup>509</sup> In order that the Church shall be a witness of hope, it is vital that the daily work of the partakers of the Eucharist also take part in the duties to build a world that is according to the plan of God.<sup>510</sup>

I agree with John Paul II that this is part of the hope for a new heaven and a new earth because engaging in a transformation of the world according to the Gospel is part of the eschatological dimension of the Christian life.<sup>511</sup>

## Conclusion

*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* integrates many aspects of the Church and the Eucharist. In this letter John Paul II first presents the importance of sacrifice. Then he explains the presence of Christ and communion as a way of sanctification. The emphasis of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* is on the ministerial priesthood and the sacrifice, and although its teaching is in continuity with his early Holy Thursday letter *Dominicae Cena*, in this text he addresses all the faithful. When John

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<sup>507</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 22. Cf. “You are my friends” (Jn 15:14). “Indeed, it is because of him that we have life: ‘He who eats me will live because of me’” (Jn 6:57). Eucharistic communion brings about in a sublime way the mutual “abiding” of Christ and each of his followers: “Abide in me, and I in you” (Jn 15:4).

<sup>508</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

<sup>509</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 22. See also *ibid*, 23 referring to (1 Cor 10:16-17) and Saint John Chrysostom's commentary on these words is profound and perceptive: “For what is the bread? It is the body of Christ. And what do those who receive it become? The Body of Christ – not many bodies but one body. For as bread is completely one, though made up of many grains of wheat, and these, albeit unseen, remain nonetheless present, in such a way that their difference is not apparent since they have been made a perfect whole, so too are we mutually joined to one another and together united with Christ.”

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*



Paul II discusses the consecration he explains that the real presence as an objective reality,<sup>512</sup> and he defines this in terms of the Council of Trent. He expresses the Eucharist as the light of hope.

In *Eucharistia de Ecclesia* John Paul II is concerned about the tendency of stripping the Eucharist of its sacrificial meaning and looking at it as only a fraternal banquet. He holds that the Eucharist is both sacrifice and sacrament. The life of the Church comes from the Paschal mystery with its two mysteries: *mysterium paschale* and *mysterium eucharisticum*.

Gift and mystery are connected and express a vertical dimension. Through a special sacramental identification with Christ the world returns redeemed to the Father not only at the cross but through the re-presentation at the eucharistic sacrifice. The faithful join in the offering, but it is the priest who acts in the person of Christ offering the sacrifice. As the offering of the whole Church, it is an offering in the name of all the faithful.<sup>513</sup> This is called a joint and inseparable activity and is brought about by Christ and the Holy Spirit. Communion is interpreted in the light of the eternal life as a pledge of the kingdom of Christ. A gift of this is already realized in the forgiveness of venial sins at the communion, and expression of the hope for eternal life. John Paul II calls the sacrifice of Christ the “full manifestation of his boundless love.”<sup>514</sup> This love has to be continued in the praxis of the communicants as they live their life in society.

John Paul presents in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* a clear teaching of the Christological and ecclesiological aspects of the Church. He finds it important to highlight the sacramental presence as objectively present, originating from the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice and

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<sup>512</sup> It is crucial to interpret this term “objectively” as not according to the categories of modern epistemology. See *ibid.*, 15 for the context.

<sup>513</sup> See McGuckian, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, 52-53. He refers to *Leviticus* 16:5-7 explaining that the high priest performs the actions, but that offering is of the people because it matters to whom the victim belongs and on whose behalf it is being offered.

<sup>514</sup> *Eucharistia de Ecclesia*, 1.

directed to sacramental and spiritual communion.<sup>515</sup> This communion includes the whole Church, on earth and in heaven, and the effects of this inclusion reach throughout the world.

### *Mane Nobiscum Domine*

The apostolic letter *Mane nobiscum Domine*, “Stay with us, Lord”, was promulgated on 7 October 2004, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, in the twenty-sixth year of the pontificate of John Paul II.<sup>516</sup> The letter refers to the promise of Christ to stay with his Church forever. It is addressed to the bishops, clergy and faithful for the Year of the Eucharist, October 2004 – October 2005. The apostolic letter refers to two planned activities to mark the beginning and end of the Year of the Eucharist: the *International Eucharistic Congress*, 10-17 October 2004, and the *Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*, 2-5 October 2005. The latter event was entitled “The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church.”<sup>517</sup>

This letter does not have any new theological teaching on the Eucharist, but refers back to *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, *Lumen Gentium* and other documents of Vatican II. The main goal of the letter is a pastoral preparing of the people for the great year of the Eucharist. It uses different approaches to present the presence of the Lord at the “breaking of bread.”<sup>518</sup>

The theme for the apostolic letter, “Stay with us, Lord for it is almost evening” (cf. Lk 24:29),<sup>519</sup> directs attention to the meeting of two of Jesus’ followers with the resurrected Jesus on their way to Emmaus. John Paul II builds on the theme of enlightenment. Christ opened the eyes of the disciples when he interpreted the scriptures for them. John Paul II notes that lights were seen at the Transfiguration and the Resurrection. He also emphasizes the “light of faith,”

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<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 and note 49, Cf. *Rituale Romanum: De sacra communione et de cultu mysterii eucharistici extra Missam*, 36 (No. 80).

<sup>516</sup> See *Mane Nobiscum Domine*  
<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_20041008\\_mane-nobiscum-domine\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20041008_mane-nobiscum-domine_en.html)> [accessed 13 January 2013].

<sup>517</sup> See *ibid.*, 4.

<sup>518</sup> See *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

the *mysterium fidei* which helps men and women find Christ veiled under the species at the Eucharist.<sup>520</sup> In his letter, John Paul II highlights three points of interpretation of the Eucharist. Firstly, *The Eucharist, a Mystery of Light*, then *The Eucharist Source and Manifestation of Communion* and, lastly, *The Eucharist, Principle and Plan of "Mission."* I shall follow John Paul II's discussion on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

### *The Eucharist, a Mystery of Light*

The main goal of this section is to focus on John Paul II's emphasis on the presence of Christ *par excellence* under the eucharistic species.<sup>521</sup> Starting with the teaching that Christ is the "light of the world" (Jn 8,12)<sup>522</sup> John Paul II moves into the eucharistic dimension made clear by Jesus: "My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" (Jn 6:55).<sup>523</sup> John Paul II accentuates that the two "tables" of the Eucharist, the table of the Word and the table of the Bread, are both important.<sup>524</sup>

It is interesting to note that he mentions the sacrifice of the Mass in only one paragraph. Here he writes: "Yet it must not be forgotten that the Eucharistic meal also has a profoundly and primarily *sacrificial* meaning."<sup>525</sup> Christ is present at the Eucharist as the risen Lord, but he still "bears the marks of his passion, of which every Mass is a 'memorial'."<sup>526</sup> In this Letter, John Paul II does not discuss how the sacrifice is carried out. He does not say that Christ is re-presented as on the cross. It is the presence of Christ as a person who points to the eschatological hope that John Paul II highlights:

It is precisely his presence which gives the other aspects of the Eucharist - as meal, as

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<sup>520</sup> See *ibid.*, 11.

<sup>521</sup> See *Mane nobiscum Domine*, 16; Cf. Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei* (3 September 1965), 39: AAS 57 (1965), 764; *Eucharisticum Mysterium* on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (25 May 1967), 9.

<sup>522</sup> See *Mane nobiscum Domine*, 11.

<sup>523</sup> See *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>524</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>525</sup> See *ibid.*, 15; Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (17 April 2003), 10: AAS 95 (2003), 439. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 38.

<sup>526</sup> See *Mane nobiscum Domine*, 15.

memorial of the Paschal Mystery, as eschatological anticipation - a significance which goes far beyond mere symbolism. The Eucharist is a mystery of presence, the perfect fulfilment of Jesus' promise to remain with us until the end of the world.<sup>527</sup>

The acclamation made by the lay faithful as an answer to the words "the mystery of faith" proclaimed by the priest after the consecration is: "We announce your death, Lord, we proclaim your resurrection...until you come" This announcement is important, John Paul II affirms, because it gives extra weight to the presence of Christ and connects it to the future hope, thus giving the meal its eschatological dimension. In this letter, John Paul II points to the importance of "*a lively awareness of Christ's real presence.*" Christ must be "a magnetic pole," not only at the celebration of the Mass, but also in "Eucharistic adoration outside the Mass."

As I have described in this section, John Paul II puts an emphasis on the real presence and sees in it the perfect promise of Christ to remain in this world until the end times. John Paul II does not discuss the work of the Holy Spirit in this chapter, but as he said at the start of his Letter, he does not repeat his teaching from *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.<sup>528</sup>

### *The Eucharist Source and Manifestation of Communion*

John Paul II uses a new expression about eucharistic communion when he says that a hunger for the full union with God is answered by God with the gift of the Eucharist that "was given so that we might be 'sated' with God here on earth, in expectation of our complete fulfilment in heaven."<sup>529</sup> John Paul II uses the model of the *priestly prayer* of Jesus to explain the connection between the communion in the Eucharist and the Church.<sup>530</sup> This communion is the source of ecclesial unity that consists both in a *hierarchical* communion and in a *fraternal* communion.<sup>531</sup>

The union of communion is expressed by both spiritual and material sharing in the

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<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>528</sup> See *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*, 20. "Even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they may also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn 17:21).

<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (6 January 2001), 43.

community.<sup>532</sup>

### *The Eucharist, Principle and Plan of “Mission”*

The Eucharist is supposed to be shared through missionary activity. John Paul II emphasizes that the “culture of the Eucharist” consists of a culture of dialogue. The expression of communion is also an expression of service for the least; it has to be “*a practical commitment to building a more just and fraternal society.*” The Eucharist is always connected to charity. John Paul II sees the ideal communion in the Church gathered around the Apostles,<sup>533</sup> but this ideal was not always kept; on the contrary, the apostle Paul explained to the Corinthians that he was not content with how they celebrated the Eucharist.<sup>534</sup> The criterion for an authentic Eucharist is true concern for those in need. This is how true Christians will be recognized.<sup>535</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The Letter *Mane nobiscum Domine* is a pastoral letter. It is a practical application of the earlier teaching on the real presence and communion, and especially on the teaching of the adoration of the Eucharistic species outside the Mass. The theology of adoration is based on the eucharistic sacrifice that is the origin of this sacramental presence and on the communion which is so important in this apostolic letter *Mane nobiscum Domine*.

John Paul II was arguably the first pope to be responsible for the interpretation of Vatican II and its global reception, as well as its theological core expressed in terms of the relationship

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<sup>532</sup> *Mane nobiscum Domine*, 22; C.f. Ac 2:42-47; 4:32-35.

<sup>533</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 11:17-34, 1 Cor 17: “Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse.” ... 20-22: “When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord’s supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?...”

<sup>534</sup> 1 Cor 11:17-26, 33.

<sup>535</sup> *Mane nobiscum Domine*, 28; Cf. Jn 13:35; Mt 25:31-46.

of the Catholic Church *ad extra*.<sup>536</sup> He was a pope whose influence extended outside the Church, especially in his plea for peace in the world and his interest in social justice for all humanity. He had a deep grasp of Vatican II “as a lived experience for the Catholic Church”, connected to the legacy of the global pontificate.<sup>537</sup> John Paul II showed a clear understanding of the Lefebvrist dispute and balanced his sympathy for Lefebvre’s concerns with a defence of Vatican II. He understood that the centrality of the liturgical issue was connected to the reception/rejection of the council.<sup>538</sup> John Paul II states the importance of the sacramental presence, the communion with Christ, and its connection to helping those in need, and sharing both spiritual and material goods among the followers of Christ.

### **Documents by Benedict XVI: *Sacramentum Caritatis* and Recent Teachings of the Roman Catholic Magisterium**

This exhortation on the Eucharist is written in three parts and was signed on 22 February 2007. It is the first post-Synodal apostolic exhortation by Benedict XVI.<sup>539</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis* is a response to the 50 propositions of the eleventh Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, held from 2-23 October 2005. Interestingly this exhortation is addressed to the bishops, the clergy, consecrated persons, and to all the lay faithful. Before writing this exhortation, Benedict XVI listened to reflections made by the Synod of Bishops expressed in *Lineamenta*, *Propositiones*, *Relationes ante* and *post disceptationem*, the interventions of the Synod Fathers, the *auditores* and the fraternal delegates.<sup>540</sup> Nevertheless, the very nature of a post-Synodal exhortation has been seen as problematic. Baldovin gives two reasons. Firstly,

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<sup>536</sup> Faggioli, *True Reform*, 151.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>539</sup> Wikipedia gives a good explanation of an apostolic exhortation. An apostolic exhortation is considered lower in formal authority than a papal encyclical, but higher than other ecclesiastical letters, Encyclicals, Apostolic Letters and other papal writings. Apostolic exhortations are commonly issued in response to a synod of bishops, in which case they are known as post-Synodal apostolic exhortations.

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic\\_exhortation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_exhortation)> [Accessed 26 September 2012].

<sup>540</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 5.

because an exhortation is the expression of the personal views of the pope, the synod does not get the chance to publish its own contributions to the discussion. Secondly, since a number of aspects were discussed, this resulted in “something of a ‘grab bag.’”<sup>541</sup>

At the start of *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Benedict XVI states which documents he considers important for the Eucharist.<sup>542</sup> He also acknowledges that he wishes to set the Exhortation alongside his first Encyclical Letter, *Deus Caritas est*. The encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003) is one of the documents he uses in his argumentation, especially because it has “a sure magisterial statement of the Church’s teaching of the Eucharist.”<sup>543</sup> Professor Eamon Duffy points out that this should not come as a surprise, as Benedict XVI (then Ratzinger) helped John Paul II to draft this encyclical.<sup>544</sup>

The name of the exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* in itself points to the teaching of the Eucharist as the sacrament of love. It shows how the Eucharist is the source and summit in the life of the Church and its mission.<sup>545</sup> In *Sacramentum Caritatis* Benedict XVI insists, as he has done many times before (as Cardinal Ratzinger), that liturgical renewal needs to be interpreted in the continuation of the historical development of the Eucharist.<sup>546</sup> His words are that the liturgical renewal has to be understood “within the overall unity of the historical development of the rite itself, without the introduction of artificial discontinuities.”<sup>547</sup>

As Cardinal Ratzinger, he wrote rather harshly about the prohibition by Paul VI of the old

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<sup>541</sup> Baldovin, *Reforming the Liturgy*, 86.

<sup>542</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 5, note 10. To name only the more important documents: Ecumenical Council of Trent, *Doctrina et canones de ss. Missae sacrificio*, DS 1738-1759; Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Mirae Caritatis* (28 May 1902): ASS (1903), 115-136; Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Mediator Dei* (20 November 1947): AAS 39 (1947), 521-595; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei* (3 September 1965): AAS 57 (1965), 753-774; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (17 April 2003): AAS 95 (2003), 433-475; Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* (25 May 1967): AAS 59 (1967), 539-573; *Instruction Liturgiam Authenticam* (28 March 2001): AAS 93 (2001), 685-726.

<sup>543</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 4.

<sup>544</sup> See E. Duffy (2007), *Benedict XVI and the Eucharist*. New Blackfriars, 88: 210.

<sup>545</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 6.

<sup>546</sup> See *ibid.*, 3, note 6. Benedict XVI writes, “I am referring here to the need for a hermeneutics of continuity also with regard to the correct interpretation of the liturgical development which followed the Second Vatican Council.” Cf. Benedict XVI, *Address to the Roman Curia* (22 December 2005).

<sup>547</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 3.

Missal. He held that with this decision Paul VI had “introduced a breach into the history of the liturgy whose consequences could only be tragic.”<sup>548</sup> With the long-awaited *Summorum pontificum* on 7 July 2007, Benedict reissued the use of the Pius V Missal of 1570 as an extraordinary form of the Latin Mass to be used alongside the ordinary form of the Latin Mass.<sup>549</sup> In this *motu proprio*, he declares that all faithful have a right to “request” celebration of the earlier rite. This action of Benedict XVI was not surprising, as it is in line with his liturgical writings as Cardinal Ratzinger, for example, in his book *The Spirit of the Liturgy*.<sup>550</sup>

### *Sacramentum Caritatis*

#### *The Eucharist, a Mystery to be Believed*

The introduction to *Sacramentum Caritatis* starts with the words: “The sacrament of charity, the Holy Eucharist is the gift that Jesus Christ makes of himself, thus revealing to us God’s infinite love for every man and woman.”<sup>551</sup> He then presents three areas that he wants to treat in more detail. He aims to “improve the quality of eucharistic celebration, to promote eucharistic

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<sup>548</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Milestones: Memoirs 1927-1977* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 146, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis. “The second great event at the beginning of my years in Regensburg was the publication of the Missal of Paul VI, which was accompanied by the almost total prohibition, after a transitional phase only a half year, of using the missal we had until then. I welcomed the fact that now we had a binding liturgical text after a period of experimentation that had often deformed the liturgy. But I was dismayed by the prohibition of the old missal, since nothing of the sort had ever happened in the entire history of the liturgy.”

<sup>549</sup> See Benedict XVI, *Summorum Pontificum* (Moto Proprio) <<http://www.catholicliturgy.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/DocumentContents/Index/2/DocumentIndex/586>> and <Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* issued *Motu Proprio*> Promulgated 7 July 2007 [accessed 23 September 2012]. “In this regard, it must first be said that the Missal published by Paul VI and then republished in two subsequent editions by John Paul II, obviously is and continues to be the normal Form – the *Forma ordinaria* – of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The last version of the *Missale Romanum* prior to the Council, which was published with the authority of Pope John XXIII in 1962 and used during the Council, will now be able to be used as a *Forma extraordinaria* of the liturgical celebration. It is not appropriate to speak of these two versions of the Roman Missal as if they were ‘two Rites.’ Rather, it is a matter of a twofold use of one and the same rite.”

<sup>550</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* 160-169. See 165-66. After a lengthy explanation on the dynamic growth of liturgy from Byzantium to Rome with its cross-fertilisation, and above all praising the “Divine Liturgy” of Chrysostom Ratzinger writes: “After the Second Vatican Council, the impression arose that the pope really could do anything in liturgical matters, especially if he were acting on the mandate of an ecumenical council. Eventually, the idea of the givenness of the liturgy, the fact that one cannot do with it what one will, faded from the public consciousness of the West. In fact, the First Vatican Council had in no way defined the pope as an absolute monarch. On the contrary, it presented him as the guarantor of obedience to the revealed Word. The pope’s authority is bound to the Tradition of faith, and that also applies to the liturgy. It is not ‘manufactured’ by the authorities. Even the pope can only be a humble servant of its lawful development and abiding integrity and identity.”

<sup>551</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 1; Cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, q.73, a.3.



adoration and to encourage a practical solidarity which, starting from the Eucharist, would reach out to those in need.”<sup>552</sup>

Benedict XVI emphasizes the importance of the relationship between what to believe of the Eucharist and how to celebrate the Eucharist. He also focuses on how to connect the mystery of faith and celebration of the Eucharist with living a life that shares the participation in the mystery with others and that proclaims the truth and celebration in everyday life. This is very important because the ecclesiology of Vatican II helps people to understand how to truly enter the offering by Christ. With the self-offering of the communicants also, prepared by a heart of conversion, the Eucharist becomes a meeting with Christ who is the “food of truth.”<sup>553</sup> “The Lord Jesus who is, ‘the way, and the truth and the life’ (Jn 14:6), speaks to our thirsting pilgrim hearts, our yearning for the source of life, our hearts longing for truth.”<sup>554</sup> Ratzinger exclaims: “What amazement must the Apostles have felt in witnessing what the Lord did and said during the Supper!”<sup>555</sup> In Jn 6:35 “Jesus said to the apostles, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty’” and Jn 6:36 [...]. “Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” This life of Christ is understood from the living bread present in the eucharistic presence. The belief in the Lord’s eucharistic presence is central to every great reform in the Church, Benedict XVI states.<sup>556</sup> This presence is a “mystery of faith”; it is “the sum and summary of our faith.”<sup>557</sup> This “mystery of faith” believed and the sacraments

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<sup>552</sup> See *ibid.*, 4.

<sup>553</sup> Truth has always been an important theme for Ratzinger. See among all his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009). See also Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Mire Caritatis*, which treats the same theme of the source of life, 4-6.

<sup>554</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 2.

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*, 1. See also *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 5-6. John Paul II uses the word ‘amazement’ three times when referring to the Eucharist and the Triduum paschale. Also Leo XIII uses this word ‘amazement’ when discussing Jesus as the bread of life. See *Mire Caritatis*, 5.

<sup>556</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 6. See *Mire Caritatis*, 16. Leo XIII emphasises that: “History bears witness that the virtues of the Christian life have flourished best wherever and whenever the frequent reception of the Eucharist has most prevailed.”

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*; Cf. CCC, 1327.

celebrated are complementary aspects of ecclesial life.<sup>558</sup> Faith is initiated by the preaching of the word of God and is sustained by the meeting with the Risen Lord in the sacraments.<sup>559</sup> It is because of the Eucharist that the Church is born anew.<sup>560</sup> To demonstrate this, Benedict XVI highlights the incarnation, which is connected to the Eucharist in that Christ's humanity is the prerequisite for the resurrected body at the Eucharist. The answer "Yes" by Jesus' mother, the "Virgin Mother of God", made it possible that, for the first time, a being "both human and divine" was born. This great mystery is discussed in Ratzinger's book *God is near us*.<sup>561</sup>

Benedict XVI focuses on the aspect of love.<sup>562</sup> The purpose of the exhortation is precisely that Christian people may develop the relationship between the eucharistic mystery, the liturgical action and the new spiritual worship that comes from the Eucharist as the sacrament of charity.<sup>563</sup> This aspect of praxis is dealt with in detail in the third part of the exhortation: *The Eucharist, a Mystery to be Lived*.<sup>564</sup>

### *The Eucharist: Jesus the True Sacrificial Lamb*

Much of the teaching in *Sacramentum Caritatis* relates to the Synod of Bishops' XI Ordinary General Assembly: *The Eucharist Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church, Lineamenta*, 28 April 2004. It emphasizes that the understanding of the Eucharist and that of the Church are interconnected.<sup>565</sup> Some of the teaching on the Eucharistic Prayer is repeated

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<sup>558</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 6.

<sup>559</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>560</sup> Benedict XVI, *Homily at the Mass of Installation in the Cathedral of Rome* (7 May 2005): AAS 97 (2005), 752. <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/2005/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20050507\\_san-giovanni-laterano\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050507_san-giovanni-laterano_en.html)> [accessed 18 February 2013].

<sup>561</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *God is Near Us: The Eucharist, The Heart of Life* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2003), see 14, Mary made her body available; see 20, it was counter to any cultural model and was absurd both for the Jews and the Greeks.

<sup>562</sup> Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (Encyclical Letter) <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20051225\\_deus-caritas-est\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html)> Promulgated 25 December 2005, [accessed 18 February 2013].

<sup>563</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 5 with reference to *Deus Caritas Est*.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-93.

<sup>565</sup> Roman Curia, *XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: The Eucharist Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church, Lineamenta*, 28 April 2004, 17-20.

and explained further. This teaching is confirmed by Benedict XVI, but he addresses the Eucharist from another point of departure when he emphasizes the free gift of the Blessed Trinity. From this point he moves to the sacrifice and ends with the relation between Sacrifice and the Cosmos. I shall now discuss the Trinitarian aspect of the sacramental celebration of the Eucharist treated in the exhortation.

### *The Trinity and the Eucharist*

The exhortation has a discussion on the Trinitarian reality of the Eucharist.<sup>566</sup> It was by the Trinitarian love that Christ was sent by his Father and was conceived by the holy Virgin Mary. The incarnation is very important to Benedict XVI. Christ gave himself as bread, teaching that everyone who eats this bread will live forever and that this bread is the flesh of Christ.<sup>567</sup> *Deus Trinitas* is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:7-8) and becomes part of the human condition. The exhortation interprets that “God’s whole life encounters us and is sacramentally shared with us. God is a perfect communion of love between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”<sup>568</sup> “[It] is in Christ, dead and risen, and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, given without measure, that we have become sharers of God’s inmost life.”<sup>569</sup> The sacramental presence, the communion and the sacrifice are totally integrated. This gift of sharing of the inmost life of God is free and a fulfilment of God’s promises. “The Church receives, celebrates, and adores this gift in faithful obedience.” The aim of the sacrifice of Christ was to take away the sin of the world (Jn 12:9), and this gift is offered to the partakers in every celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>570</sup> What Benedict XVI points out is that Jesus becomes contemporary and enters the life of the faithful.<sup>571</sup> By Christ’s command “do this in remembrance of me”, writes Benedict XVI, he “left us the task of

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< [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/) > [accessed 18 February 2013].

<sup>566</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis* 7, 8.

<sup>567</sup> Jn 6:32-33; Jn 6:51.

<sup>568</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 7.

<sup>569</sup> See *ibid.*, 8.

<sup>570</sup> See *ibid.*, 9.

<sup>571</sup> Cf. *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 7.

entering into his ‘hour.’”<sup>572</sup> He holds that: “The Eucharist draws us into Jesus’ act of self-oblation. More than just statically receiving the incarnate *Logos*, we enter into the dynamic of his self-giving.”<sup>573</sup> He also states: “Jesus draws us into himself.”<sup>574</sup>

How is it possible to become “sharers of God’s life”? The answer is that it is by the mystery of Trinitarian love.<sup>575</sup> Because it is a mystery of faith, it cannot be explained. But Benedict XVI tries to explain the road to receiving the mystery. He writes that Christ, once risen, bears the signs of the passion and that Christ in his “farewell discourse” relates the gift of his life in the paschal mystery to his own life.<sup>576</sup> He can thus pour out his Spirit on the apostles and make them partakers in his own mission.<sup>577</sup> At Pentecost the Spirit was given to the Church, and she started to proclaim the teaching of Christ, the Good News to all people. “Thus it is through the working of the Spirit that Christ himself continues to be present and active in his Church, starting with her vital centre which is the Eucharist.”<sup>578</sup> It is the Spirit which is invoked by the prayer of the celebrant on the gifts of bread and wine that is placed on the altar, and it is “the same Spirit who gathers the faithful ‘into one body’ and makes of them a spiritual offering pleasing to the Father.”<sup>579</sup> Benedict XVI continues to elucidate this by writing that through the sacrament of the Eucharist, Christ “draws the faithful into his ‘hour’; he shows us the bond that he willed to establish between himself and us, between his own person and the Church. Indeed, in the sacrifice of the Cross, Christ gave birth to the Church as his Bride and

<sup>572</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 11.

<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.* Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*.

<sup>574</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Homily at Marienfeld Esplanade* (21 August 2005): AAS 97 (2005), 891-892.

<sup>575</sup> Augustinus Aurelius, intr, trans, and notes Edmund Hill, O.P. ed. John E. Rotelle and Augustinian Heritage Institute. *The Works of Saint Augustine : A Translation for the 21st Century*. P. 1, Books. Vol. 5, the Trinity (New York: New City Press, 1991), 253; For original text: *De Trinitate*, VIII, 8: 12. CCL 50, 287. “‘Yes I can see charity, and to the best of my ability grasp it with my mind, and I believe the scripture when it says that *God is charity and whosoever abides in charity abides in God* (1 Jn 4:16.) But when I see it, I don’t see any trinity in it.’ Oh but you do see a trinity if you see charity.”

<sup>576</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 12 with reference to Jn 16:7.

<sup>577</sup> Cf. Jn 20:22.

<sup>578</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 12.

<sup>579</sup> See *ibid.*, 13; See also note 29 with reference to *Propositio* 42: “This eucharistic encounter takes place in the Holy Spirit, who transforms and sanctifies us. He re-awakens in the disciple the firm desire to proclaim boldly to others all that he has heard and experienced, to bring them to the same encounter with Christ. Thus the disciple, sent forth by the Church, becomes open to a mission without frontiers.”

his body.”<sup>580</sup> There is the causal connection between Christ’s sacrifice, the Eucharist and the Church. Benedict XVI has discussed this in his earlier writing as Cardinal Ratzinger.

*Sacrifice is the Basic Form of the Eucharist*

The exhortation also explains that the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper took place within the ritual meal commemorating the deliverance from Egypt. “This ritual meal, which called for the sacrifice of lambs (cf. Ex 12:1-28, 43-51), was a remembrance of the past, but at the same time a prophetic remembrance, the proclamation of a deliverance yet to come.”<sup>581</sup> Benedict XVI also refers to the prayer of thanksgiving, the *Berakah*, in which Christ both thanks his Father for the great gifts of the past history, but also for his own ‘exaltation.’<sup>582</sup> Three points are important; the first is that Jesus anticipates and makes present his sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection. The second is that he considers himself the sacrificial lamb. The third is that Jesus places his sacrifice in this framework and demonstrates this mystery of his resurrection, which renews not only the history of humankind but also that of the whole cosmos.<sup>583</sup> “[Thus] it is through the working of the Holy Spirit that Christ himself continues to be present in the Eucharist and active in his Church...”<sup>584</sup> The role of the Holy Spirit is of decisive importance in transubstantiation, the transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.<sup>585</sup> The same Spirit transforms the bread and wine, gathers the faithful into one body, and thus makes them a spiritual offering pleasing to God.<sup>586</sup> Christ becomes all in all, present in his totality within the members of the Church<sup>587</sup> Benedict XVI reminds that individual members make up the spiritual stones of the Church. He also says that singing is an

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<sup>580</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 14.

<sup>581</sup> See *ibid.*, 9.

<sup>582</sup> See *ibid.*, 10.

<sup>583</sup> See *ibid.*, 9; 11. Cf. 1 Cor 15:28

<sup>584</sup> See *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>585</sup> See *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>586</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>587</sup> See *ibid.*, 36

expression of joy. The new man sings a new song.<sup>588</sup>

The Eucharistic Prayer is the “centre and summit of the entire celebration”, says Benedict XVI.<sup>589</sup> I shall cite Benedict XVI’s discussion of the “subject” of this important prayer in the Eucharist. He writes:

The “subject” of the liturgy’s intrinsic beauty is Christ himself, risen and glorified in the Holy Spirit, who includes the Church in his work. Here we can recall an evocative phrase of Saint Augustine which strikingly describes this dynamic of faith proper to the Eucharist. The great Bishop of Hippo, speaking specifically of the eucharistic mystery, stresses the fact that Christ assimilates us to himself: “The bread you see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. The chalice, or rather, what the chalice contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ. In these signs, Christ the Lord willed to entrust to us his body and the blood which he shed for the forgiveness of our sins. If you have received them properly, you yourselves are what you have received.” Consequently, “not only have we become Christians, we have become Christ himself.” We can thus contemplate God’s mysterious work, which brings about a profound unity between ourselves and the Lord Jesus: “one should not believe that Christ is in the head but not in the body; rather he is complete in the head and in the body.”<sup>590</sup>

The Eucharist is the action of God, which draws the partakers of the Liturgy into Christ through the Holy Spirit. Because this has divine origin, it is not up to human beings to change the basic structure of the liturgy. It comes from the living Tradition and is based on Christ’s command, writes Benedict XVI. This is the reason he finds it wrong when Paul VI excluded the *Missa Normativa*, as Benedict XVI calls the Missal of Paul VI.<sup>591</sup>

### *The Liturgy as Communion*

Benedict XVI points also to the relationship between Eucharist and *communio* which I have already discussed in my treatment of the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, and I shall not return to this now. Instead I shall add a last point. The importance that Benedict XVI puts on

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<sup>588</sup> See *ibid.*, 42. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *A New song for the Lord: Faith in Christ and Liturgy Today*, trans. Marta M Matesich (New York: Crossroad, 1966).

<sup>589</sup> Referring to *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 78.

<sup>590</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 36.

<sup>591</sup> For a discussion see Eamon Duffy, *Benedict XVI and the Eucharist* (The Dominican Council: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 211-212.

the relationship between the Eucharist and practical solidarity which, starting from the Eucharist, shall reach out to those in need. The Eucharist is a celebration of gratitude and of eschatological hope and is “a glimpse of heaven on earth.”<sup>592</sup> The Eucharist is the sacrament of peace and this truth of the eucharistic mystery has to be lived in the world.

### *Conclusion*

The communal aspect of the liturgy that Benedict XVI emphasizes is central. The Christian is a member of the unity of the Church. This means that the liturgy is the prayer of the Church; it is a prayer with which Christ unceasingly becomes contemporaneous with the partakers of the liturgy.<sup>593</sup> The liturgy is the gift of God, an entry into the *obsequium rationale*, the rational worship of the Logos. In other words it can be said that the self-giving of God is a participation in the worship of the Incarnate Logos, directed to the Father in the Spirit.<sup>594</sup>

The Eucharistic Prayer is an entering into the prayer of Christ. The prayer has a Trinitarian significance. The self-surrender of Christ on the Cross is in obedience to the Father and in the Holy Spirit. Christ’s self-surrender is the self-surrender of mankind to the Father. The spiritual nourishment given at sacramental communion is subordinated to a greater whole and integrated to it.<sup>595</sup> The Eucharist is always a remembrance of the Last Supper, a celebration of the re-presentation of Christ’s Sacrifice and the Passover dimension with the eternal life and the hope of Christ’s coming again at the end of time has a cosmic character.<sup>596</sup>

The sacrifice on the Cross is basic to the form of the Eucharist. The sacramental sacrifice at the Mass becomes fulfilled with the presence of Christ and the union with him. Christ’s act on the cross is one unique act that cannot exist without the sacrificial centrality in it, and this act is made present at the sacramental sacrifice. The incarnation of Christ is emphasized and

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<sup>592</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 35.

<sup>593</sup> Cf. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 7.

<sup>594</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 8; Cf. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 23.

<sup>595</sup> Cf. Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, 18f.

<sup>596</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 10.

with this the work of the Holy Spirit, which is present at the Eucharist. God the Trinity is love. This cannot be explained but is realised at the Eucharistic prayer, which is central to the entire celebration.

From this, I conclude that for Benedict XVI the sacrifice is central in the interrelationship between the sacrifice, real presence and communion. This does not exclude that the presence and the communion permeate the whole action. It is as a community that the Church celebrates the Eucharist. The unity of the Church is also expressed in the communion, which is the fruit of the eucharistic action and is the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Benedict XVI's view is that not only does the actual celebration of the Eucharist related to sacrifice, real presence and communion, but it is also placed in a wider context of interdependency. The *communio-ecclesiology* of Ratzinger is still visible in the teaching of Benedict XVI, as is his Christocentric accent of the Eucharist.

### ***Recent Roman Catholic Official Teachings***

On July 7, 2007, the Vatican released the *moto proprio Summorum pontificum* that authorizes the use of the Latin Missal of Pope John XXIII, a reissue of the Pius V Missal of 1570 that was promulgated soon after The Council of Trent (December 13, 1545 until December 4, 1563). The *Summorum Pontificum* states that all the faithful have the right to ask for the celebration of the Tridentine rite and strongly requests bishops to satisfy their wishes. This decree confirmed that Tridentine rite and the Missal of Paul VI (1969) are both to be considered valid forms of Catholic Christian worship in the West.

In a December 2005 statement, Benedict discerns two different ways of interpretation. The first, which he rejects, speaks in terms of hermeneutics of discontinuity and rupture. The second, which he advocates, focuses on the authoritative status of the Vatican II council documents themselves. It is the final form of the texts that are important, not the different documents leading up to them. In this discussion he wants to put focus on the fundamental



principles that never change, and also on the practice and church teaching in the face of changing historical contexts.

### *On the Contribution of the Texts and the Council*

There is a similarity between the goal of Vatican II and the dogmatic Council of Trent (1545 – 63) in placing the ecclesial centrality of the Eucharist as font and summit of the Church. There are also complementarities of the doctrinal and pastoral approaches, in that the last Council is concerned with applying the doctrines to contemporary life.<sup>597</sup>

Pope Paul VI referred to the Second Vatican Council as being an ecclesiological one.<sup>598</sup> The ecclesiology is given a new perspective as it describes the nature of the Church, the Church of Christ, as an aspect of the mystery of Christ, with a closer emphasis on the Church as Sacrament. This sacrament is a “sacrament of unity” (LG1), a “universal sacrament of salvation” (LG 48).<sup>599</sup> In the Documents of Vatican II, the Eucharist is not treated in a chapter of its own, but in a close connection with the Church.<sup>600</sup> It is obvious that the Eucharist and the Church are interrelated. This understanding is what I believe to be the most important contribution of Vatican II to the understanding of the Eucharist. Dialogue with the world and within the Church became important. New ways of freedom developed both within the Church and in its relations to society and this resulted in a new Catholic ecumenism.<sup>601</sup>

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<sup>597</sup> *Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI on the Occasion of the International Congress on the theme “The Second Vatican Council in the Pontificate of John Paul II,”* the Vatican, 28 October 2008, xxv <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/pont-messages/2008/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20081028\\_tasca\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/pont-messages/2008/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20081028_tasca_en.html)> [accessed 13 January 2013].

<sup>598</sup> See citation in *Address to the Holy Father John Paul II to the Conference Studying the Implementation of the Second Vatican Council, Sunday, 27 February 2000*, “The Council, which has given us a rich ecclesiological doctrine, has organically linked its teaching about the Church with its teaching about man's vocation in Christ”, 8 <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/2000/jan-mar/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20000227\\_vatican-council-ii\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2000/jan-mar/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20000227_vatican-council-ii_en.html)> [accessed 21 December 2011].

<sup>599</sup> See also Dulles, “Catholic Ecclesiology Since Vatican II,” in *Concilium*, 1986, 4.

<sup>600</sup> Békés, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 347.

<sup>601</sup> See the document *Unitatis Redintegratio* especially, 8 and 14, see also *Lumen Gentium*, 15.

### *Joseph Ratzinger's Reinterpretation of the Ecclesiology of Vatican II*

One of the means I have used for my evaluation of the Eucharistic theology of Ratzinger concerning the Second Vatican Council is the address that he gave in September 2001, when he was invited by the Archbishop Mario Milano of Aversa to the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa.<sup>602</sup> In his speech Ratzinger starts by presenting ideas of the Church that were discussed during the years 1920-1960, and then describes his views of the fundamental elements of the Council's teaching on the Church.

In his presentation, he uses different themes, issues, and perspectives to interpret the Council's version of the Church. He starts with a discussion of the Church as the Body of Christ, then the Church as the People of God, and at last the Church as Communion. When he treats the Church as the Body of Christ, he is addressing the Image of the Mystical Body and makes a summary of eucharistic ecclesiology.

Gerard Mannion holds that there have been questions as to whether Ratzinger has focused on different aspects than the Council, and that Ratzinger perhaps makes a reinterpretation of Vatican II and not an explanation of the Council.<sup>603</sup> Mannion also discusses the issue of whether Ratzinger uses too many historical and theological generalizations leading to different interpretations than were intended by the Council Fathers.<sup>604</sup>

In order to understand Vatican II, it is necessary, according to Ratzinger, to be attentive to the currents and tendencies that were at hand during the Council period.<sup>605</sup> These themes are as following, the Last Supper as the foundation of the Church, the community of the Church, and the relation of the local Churches and the universal Church.<sup>606</sup> What is interesting here is

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<sup>602</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger et al, *The Ratzinger Reader: Mapping a Theological Journey*, ed. Lieven Boeve and Gerard Mannion (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 100; Ratzinger, *Conference of Cardinal Ratzinger at the opening of the Pastoral congress of the diocese of Aversa*, (Italy), 5-8.

<sup>603</sup> Gerard Mannion "Understanding the Church" in Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 101.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>606</sup> See for example Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Communio in notio, Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on some Aspects of the Church understood as Communion*.

that Ratzinger uses his Eucharistic ecclesiology as a key to comprehension of Vatican II's conception of the local Churches.<sup>607</sup>

### ***The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council***

#### *Changes at Vatican II affecting the Lay Faithful*

Vatican II led to many changes that affected the laity in its relation to the Eucharist.<sup>608</sup> The use of the vernacular gave the lay faithful a new possibility to understand the text and thus to participate in a more active way in the celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of Hours. The new liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated with the priest turning toward the people. The communion is at times also extended to the laity. Laity properly chosen and trained are furthermore allowed to function as extraordinary helpers distributing the body and blood of Christ, and laypersons are allowed to function as readers. The development of a permanent married Diaconate has also changed the form of the Church's ministry.<sup>609</sup> New pastoral experiments were conducted in central areas of Catholic life.<sup>610</sup>

The dramatic nature of these changes is obvious. The celebration of the Eucharist was instituted at the Last Supper celebrated in the vernacular, and thus it is fitting that the Eucharist be celebrated in the vernacular. Successively, in the life of the Church the lay people were partly excluded from the active celebration, and now they are not. Over the centuries, the primary focus moved to the priest, and that has been corrected. The liturgical language in the West was Latin. Another point is that only the priest was supposed to receive the body and

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<[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_28051992\\_communionis-notio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_28051992_communionis-notio_en.html)> (28 May 1992 ), [accessed 28 August 2012]; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus* (Declaration on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church), 6 August 2000 <[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20000806\\_dominus-iesus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html)> [accessed 19 February 2013].

<sup>607</sup> Gerard Mannion, "Understanding the Church," in Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 100.

<sup>608</sup> Gerard Moore, *Understanding the General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, (New York, Paulist Press, 2007), 92-96.

<sup>609</sup> Livingstone: *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Oxford: University Press, 2000, 603.

<sup>610</sup> Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, eds, *History of Vatican II, Vol. I, Announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II: Toward a new Era in Catholicism* (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 5.

blood as given separately, and now the laity may also receive under both species. The adoration of the blessed Sacrament rivalled the communion of the lay people. This too changed with Vatican II.

The negative aspect of all these changes is that they have made many faithful uncertain of what the teaching of the Eucharist is. One of the central issues in the eucharistic debate which followed was whether the Eucharist should be celebrated as a sacrifice or as a communal meal.<sup>611</sup> There has also been discussion about interpreting the eucharistic presence; some prefer to return to an earlier use of symbol as a way of explaining the real presence. Louis-Marie Chauvet has used symbol and sacrament in a sacramental reinterpretation of Christian experience.<sup>612</sup> The corporate nature of the Eucharist is highly important.

### *Implications of the Council's teaching on Eucharistic theology*

Implementation of the Council's teaching on Eucharistic theology has been much disputed over the many years, and the debate is still going on. Much effort has been made by theologians to make the proper interpretation; in later chapters, I shall discuss some aspects of this. The understanding of the Council can be said to depend on the reading of the Council's texts and taking part in the Church's life. To this comes also a will to self-examination of one's own way of interpretation.<sup>613</sup>

To conclude this chapter, I want to stress "the renewal" and "change" which came with Vatican II. The liturgical adaptations were intended to bring about "fully conscious and active participations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy" (SC 14). *Sacramentum*

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<sup>611</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, 33-60 see especially page 50; Cf. McGuckian, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, 78; 103-05. McGuckian presents a three-part model of sacrifice 1) Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, 2) the priestly mediation taking part in heaven, and 3) the sacred meal shared with God. For McGuckian a sacrifice is a joyful meal shared with God and the cross is a necessary preparation. This is however essential to the two acts that follow the death, "Christ's intercession at the Father's right hand and the banquet of eternal life. The banquet of eternal life is the Universal Sacrifice of the Cross, the Sacrifice of the Cross," 105.

<sup>612</sup> Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*.

<sup>613</sup> Bushman, ed., *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, xxvii.

*Caritatis* stresses that “[i]n the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by the people is the aim considered before all else,…” I also want to point out the document’s insistence that “a prime need, therefore, is that attention be directed, first of all, to the liturgical instruction of the clergy” (SC 14).

Pope John Paul II described Vatican II as the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church of our time.<sup>614</sup> Vatican II puts the Eucharist in the context of the Church, but the problem remains how to interpret the inner and outer characteristics and acts of the Eucharist, and to explain these in the language of our time. In doing this, one has to understand the relationship between renewal and dialogue, and to follow the call to holiness in Vatican II teaching.<sup>615</sup>

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<sup>614</sup> John Paul II *Address of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Conference Studying the Implementation of the Second Vatican Council*; Cf. Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II*, 85. The credit for the final report of the 1985 Synod of Bishops, *relatio finalis*, was given to Cardinal Godfried Danneels and Walter Kasper. Walter Kasper, the secretary of the Synod expressed that the “ecclesiological interpretation of Vatican II was visible in the opening of the *relatio*, in which Vatican II was defined as a ‘grace of God and a gift of the Holy Spirit, from which have come forth many spiritual fruits *for the universal Church and the particular Churches*, as well as for the men of our time.’” Faggioli’s interpretation of the synod is that it gave the theology of the cross a more visible role both in preaching and theology and was less optimistic on the relationship between the Church and the world than *Gaudium et Spes*.

<sup>615</sup> Bushman, *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, xvii.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PRESENTATION OF RATZINGER'S EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY

#### Introduction

In this chapter I present Ratzinger's eucharistic theology, which is based mainly on a *communio-ecclesiology*. Ratzinger combines an ecclesiology based on the unity that comes from the eucharistic communion with the communitarian aspect of the Church as the People of God.<sup>616</sup> In close connection with this, he also develops his Christology. His Christology is deeply eucharistic, focusing on the resurrected Christ, which Ratzinger regards as a personal meeting in the sacramental celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>617</sup> The Eucharist is also interpreted as furthering both multiplicity and unity in the Church. At the end of the chapter I present Ratzinger's approach to the understanding of the sacrifice of Christ as a thanksgiving sacrifice, a *todah* sacrifice,<sup>618</sup> which according to Ratzinger fits well with the form and content of the Eucharist.<sup>619</sup> This is a sacrifice made as thanksgiving to God the Father, in the specific situation of Christ giving his life for the redemption of the world and the thanksgiving for his resurrection. Ratzinger gives Hartmut Gese the credit for the hypothesis of the *todah* sacrifice as a bridge between the Old and New Testament, which he regards as a kind of a missing link,

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<sup>616</sup> Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 88; 104-108. Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 293.

<sup>617</sup> Ratzinger, *God is Near Us*, 81.

<sup>618</sup> *Todah* sacrifice is a sacrifice of thanksgiving and connotes a confession of praise and is a sacrificial meal offered for example by someone whose life has been rescued from a great peril (cf. Jonah 3:3-19). Cf. Louis-Marie Chauvet on the Eucharist in, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 310. "Nevertheless, the dimension of communion is primary in Christianity, as is shown by the early connection between *todah* ('sacrifice of praise') and Eucharistia. Consequently, if the dimension of '*propitiation*' (understood as 'reconciliation' or 'pardon'), so strongly underlined with regard to the 'sacrifice of the Mass' at the Council of Trent against the Reformers, is indeed constitutive of the Eucharist, it is *within* its nature as a 'sacrifice of thanksgiving' (inadequately emphasized by Trent) that this is to be understood. *It is in giving thanks*, in giving back to God God's own Grace, Christ given in sacrament, that *we are given back ourselves*, that is, placed or replaced in our status of sons and daughters and thus reconciled."

<sup>619</sup> See Ratzinger "Form and Content in The Eucharistic Celebration. Problematic: The Category of 'Form'" in Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, 33-60.

retrieved during the last century.<sup>620</sup> In this approach, Ratzinger sees a close connection with the structural unity between the *todah* sacrifice and the eucharistic sacrifice, as well as with the *todah* spirituality presented in the psalms and Christology.<sup>621</sup> Ratzinger argues that this new *todah* approach to sacrifice sheds new light on the dispute over the question of sacrifice that has separated Christendom for more than four centuries. Here he discovers new possibilities both for preserving and deepening of the Roman Catholic tradition, as well as a receptivity of Luther's central intentions.<sup>622</sup>

### ***Biography***

Joseph Ratzinger was born 16 April 1927 in the Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn. He had an early attraction to the priesthood and entered the Freising seminary in 1946. The next year he started his theological formation at the University of Munich where his professors among others were Romano Guardini, Michael Schmaus, and Gottlieb Söhngen. In his book *Milestones*,<sup>623</sup> he describes that when he in 1949 was reading the works *Catholicism* and *Corpus Mysticum* by Henri de Lubac, this opened his insights to the understanding of the unity of the Church and the Eucharist. This issue was for Ratzinger a new way to enter the essential dialogue with Augustine, which he already had sought for a long time.<sup>624</sup> In 1951, Ratzinger was ordained priest and in 1953, he graduated as a doctor of theology with a doctoral dissertation on the writings of Augustine of Hippo, entitled the *People and Household of God*.<sup>625</sup> Augustine's theology has been central to Ratzinger, and he often returns to him in his writings.

The next phase in Ratzinger's academic career is described as "The Drama of my

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<sup>620</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>621</sup> See *Todah* Psalms for example *Psalms* 69; 51; 22; 113-118.

<sup>622</sup> Cf. Tim Gray, "From Jewish Passover to Christian Eucharist: the Story of the *Todah*." *Lay Witness* (Nov/Dec, 2002).

<sup>623</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Milestones: Memoirs 1927-1977*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 1998), 98.

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>625</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche* (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag, 1992).

Habilitation and the Freising Years.”<sup>626</sup> In *Milestones*, Ratzinger writes of the difficulties that came to surround his habilitation thesis „*Die Geschichts-theologie des heiligen Bonaventura*.”<sup>627</sup> He has expressed that the student riot in 1968 had a scaring effect on him.<sup>628</sup> After his habilitation, he worked as professor of theology for many years, mainly teaching fundamental theology and dogmatics in different German universities.<sup>629</sup>

During Vatican II Ratzinger was appointed first as the personal advisor to Cardinal Josef Frings of Cologne and in 1963 as an official peritus. He was also instrumental in the founding of the international journal *Concilium*,<sup>630</sup> first published in 1964.<sup>631</sup> In 1972, he became a cofounder of a new quarterly theological journal *Internationale Katolische Zeitschrift Communio*, together with Hans Urs von Balthasar, Karl Lehmann, and Henri de Lubac.<sup>632</sup> *Communio* has since then been an important place for Ratzinger to share his theological thinking.<sup>633</sup> Ecclesiology was early a main interest of Ratzinger and influences the whole corpus of his writings<sup>634</sup> and it has remained to be so.

Ratzinger’s “career” advanced as follows: in 1977, he became Archbishop of Munich and Freising, appointed by Pope Paul IV; in 1981, he was by request of Pope John Paul II made

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<sup>626</sup> Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 103.

<sup>627</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Die Geschichtsteologie des Heiligen Bonaventura*, (München: Schnell & Steiner, 1959). Reprint (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1992).

<sup>628</sup> John L. Allen, *Joseph Ratzinger*, trans. from american english Hubert Pfau (Patmos Verlag: Düsseldorf, 2005), 97.

<sup>629</sup> Ratzinger held the chair of fundamental theology at Bonn (1959-63), until his appointment as *peritus* assisting the archbishop Cardinal Joseph Frings of Cologne. Ratzinger held the chair in dogmatic theology and the history of dogma in Münster (1964-66), the chair in dogmatic theology at Tübingen (1966-69), and the chair of dogmatic theology at the theological faculty at the University of Regensburg (1969-1977). He became dean and vice president at the University of Regensburg, and finally theological advisor to the German bishops. See <<http://www.popebenedictxivfanclub.com>> [accessed 5 February 2012].

<sup>630</sup> Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 2.

<sup>631</sup> In 1964 Ratzinger was regarded as a balanced “progressive” or at least “open-minded” scholar by some when he was numbered among the founders. In *The Ratzinger Report* he holds that he has not changed “it is not I who have changed, but others.” See Joseph Ratzinger and V. Messori, *The Ratzinger Report* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 18-19...

<sup>632</sup> See Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 3.

<sup>633</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>634</sup> He published his first collection of essays on ecclesiology in 1968. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum, Vorlesungen über das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis*. (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1968) in English *Introduction to Christianity; Das neue Volk Gottes. Entwürfe zur Ekklesiologie* (Düsseldorf: Taschenbuchausgabe, 1969).



Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith;<sup>635</sup> in 1986, he was chosen as head of a commission responsible for writing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.<sup>636</sup>

Joseph Ratzinger was already a well-known theologian when he was announced as Pope Benedict XVI on 19 April 2005. His work had already made a great impact on Roman Catholic theology. Ratzinger was always determined to publish his theology in his own name, outside his other commitments, as Pope Benedict XVI, he has continued to do so.

The fact that Ratzinger has continued to write in his own name has been questioned because it has at times been difficult to distinguish the roles of prefect and theologian.<sup>637</sup> Ratzinger himself, as Lieven Boeve remarks, has said that it is a real danger that a prefect confuses the roles.<sup>638</sup> The method that Ratzinger proposes is “first, by not publishing in a personal capacity anything related to the subject matter of a case pending at the congregation, and second, by strictly adhering to the objectivity of the procedures to be followed, e.g. in investigations of the work of theologians.”<sup>639</sup> This method does not solve all problems. Boeve gives two examples of the difficulties that remain. The first is Ratzinger’s reflections in “The Ratzinger Report” where he as cardinal expresses his personal views just before the extraordinary conference of bishops in 1985, which had the aim to evaluate Vatican II after twenty-years.<sup>640</sup> The second example is Ratzinger’s personal reflections published in *Trenta*

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<sup>635</sup> As pointed out by Lieven Boeve, “Introduction” in Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 4. “From this position, he would acquire enormous influence on the Vatican’s theological and institutional outlook and policy.”

<sup>636</sup> See <<http://popebenedictxvi.blogspot.se/2008/08/joseph-cardinal-ratzinger-biography.html>> [accessed 3 August 2013]. “1986 on July 10, Pope John Paul II appointed Cardinal Ratzinger head of a 12-member commission responsible for drafting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The text was released in French in 1992 and in English in 1994.”

<sup>637</sup> For a thorough discussion, see Boeve, “Introduction” in Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 9-10.

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.* Boeve is using a citation from D. Seeber, “Gesicht und Aufgabe einer Glaubensbehörde. Ein Gespräch mit Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger über die römische Glaubenskongregation” in *Herderkorrespondenz*, 38 (1984), 364.

<sup>640</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Ratzinger and Messori, *The Ratzinger Report*, 10. “It should be considered that no other personage in the Church- apart from the Pope, of course- could answer our questions with greater authority. As is known, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is the instrument through which the Holy See promotes the deepening of faith and watches vigilantly over its purity. Accordingly it is the custodian proper of Catholic orthodoxy.”

*Giorni*<sup>641</sup> prior to the official promulgation of the first instruction on liberation theology.<sup>642</sup>

However, as Boeve writes, on the positive side is the issue that Ratzinger's comments also help to understand problems of internal ecclesial politics.<sup>643</sup>

When Ratzinger was elected pope on 19 April 2005 and took the name Benedict XVI there emerged new problems when he remained theologically active. One problem was that his encyclicals *Deus Caritas Est* (December 24, 2005), *Spees Salvi* (30 November 2007), and *Caritas in Veritate* (28 June 2009) were composed around the same period as when he was writing and publishing his books on *Jesus of Nazareth* (2007, 2011 and 2012).<sup>644</sup> As Pope Benedict XVI, he is the Church leader, but as an individual theologian, he presents his personal opinion. When it concerns the book *Jesus of Nazareth*, people are invited to express their own opinion on his theology<sup>645</sup>, but this is not the case when he exercises the power of the magisterium. The individual work of a theologian has no obligation to be adhered to as do magisterial pronouncements.<sup>646</sup> Adding to the confusion of the roles of pope and individual theologian is that: "Many of his earlier works have been and continue to be republished, and many previously published articles have been edited into collections and published in various forms."<sup>647</sup>

In *Lumen Gentium* 25, we find information on what Vatican II said about its own teaching. It holds that the Roman pontiff exercises his ordinary teaching through papal encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, and other documents that are addressed to the whole Church and by "his explicit and formal approval of doctrinal statements that are promulgated by the

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<sup>641</sup> See Boeve, "Introduction" in Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 10 referring to Joseph Ratzinger, *Vi spiego la teologia*, in *30 giorni* (Marchaart 1984), 48-55; See also Ratzinger and Messori, *The Ratzinger Report* 27-53 on "A Council to be Rediscovered" and "At the Root of the Crisis: The Idea of the Church."

<sup>642</sup> Boeve, "Introduction" in Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 10.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>644</sup> Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, xxiv.

<sup>645</sup> Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, xxiii.

<sup>646</sup> Francis A. Sullivan "Magisterium" in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, 614-620.

<sup>647</sup> Boeve, "Introduction" in Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 7.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.”<sup>648</sup> *The Encyclical* emphasises that the Roman Pontiff’s supreme magisterium is to be acknowledged with *obsequium religiosum* often translated as “religious submission” or “respect,” and the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to. As Sullivan points out “one might use ‘submission’ when speaking of the response due to the supreme teaching authority of the pope and the whole college, and ‘respect’ of the response to the authority of an individual bishop...”<sup>649</sup>

There has also been the question of the evolution in Ratzinger’s theological approach over 50 years. When asked about this Ratzinger emphasizes the continuity of his theology. He acknowledges that although there have been “changes and development in the actions of my thought, my basic impulse, precisely during the Council, was always to free up the authentic kernel of the faith from encrustations and to give this kernel strength and dynamism. This impulse is the constant of my life.”<sup>650</sup> Ratzinger’s own self-judgement is “that he has from his earliest days stuck to a consistent theological vision”.<sup>651</sup> Rowland affirms that the problems within the Church that attract his attention may have changed, not his basic theological orientation.<sup>652</sup> This is a view shared by Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, who was a student of Ratzinger.<sup>653</sup> About same evaluation is given by Lieven Boeve, who holds that Ratzinger’s position is somewhat adjusted over the years but that a fundamental continuity is noticeable.<sup>654</sup> To him it is clear that Ratzinger has kept “a firm internal consistency throughout more than fifty years.”<sup>655</sup> It is also well-known that Ratzinger was discontent with the text of *Gaudium et*

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<sup>648</sup> Francis A. Sullivan “Magisterium” in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, 617.

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.*, 617-618.

<sup>650</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the End of the Millennium. An Interview with Peter Seewald*. trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 79.

<sup>651</sup> Tracey Rowland, *Ratzinger’s Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Oxford: University Press, 2009), 11.

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>653</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>654</sup> Boeve, “Introduction” in Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 11.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

*Spes* and have expressed this even more clear during the years as Benedict XVI.<sup>656</sup> Boeve adds that: “Rather, it is the severe tone and polemic writing style that distinguish a number of his later works from the earlier writings.”<sup>657</sup> This is particularly true about Ratzinger’s “conviction that Vatican II has been interpreted and put into praxis in an erroneous fashion.”<sup>658</sup> Furthermore, Rowland points that Benedict XVI’s first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love) (2006), which begins with a reiteration of the account of Revelation in *Dei Verbum*, and that his first apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (the sacrament of charity) (2007), offers corrections of false interpretations of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and further develops the ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium*.<sup>659</sup>

The key themes of Ratzinger’s theology have been ecclesiology, liturgy, and revelation. With these aspects in mind, I survey Ratzinger’s communio-ecclesiology and Christology in order to analyse his interpretation of the eucharistic sacrifice, the eucharistic presence, and the eucharistic communion.

### ***Ratzinger’s Communio-Ecclesiology***

Ecclesiology and sacramental theology are tightly connected. In order to discuss Ratzinger’s understanding of the eucharistic sacrifice, I begin with a study of his ecclesiology.

Ratzinger’s theology started from an ecclesiological perspective and underscored the notion of *communio*. The Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985 aimed to make an evaluation of the twenty years since Vatican II, especially its ecclesiology.<sup>660</sup> In the Final Report of this

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<sup>656</sup> Boeve, “Christian Faith, Church and World” in Ratzinger et al. *The Ratzinger Reader*, 119-125; Rowland, *Ratzinger’s Faith*, 30-47.

<sup>657</sup> Boeve, “Introduction” in Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 11.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>659</sup> Rowland, *Ratzinger’s Faith*, 11.

<sup>660</sup> See Part II *Particular Themes of the Synod*, “The Church as communion. The meaning of communion.” See <[http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/documentazione/documents/sinodo\\_indice\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/documentazione/documents/sinodo_indice_en.html)> [accessed 28 August 2012]. The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the Council’s documents. Koinonia/communion, founded on the Sacred Scripture, have been held in great honor in the early Church and in the Oriental Churches to this day. Thus, much was done by the Second Vatican Council so that the Church as communion might be more clearly understood and concretely incorporated into life. What does the complex word

Synod, it is clear that Vatican II placed “communio” at the centre. In the years that followed the Synod of 1985, many misunderstood the word “communio”, and this disappointed Ratzinger.<sup>661</sup>

Of the period after the 1985 Synod, Ratzinger writes:

The following years demonstrated the fact that no word is safe from misunderstanding, not even the best and most profound word. To the extent that ‘communio’ became an easy slogan, it was devalued and distorted. As happened to the concept ‘People of God’, one must point to a growing horizontal understanding that abandoned the concept of God. The ecclesiology of communion was reduced to a consideration of relations between the local Church and the universal Church; this in turn was reduced to the problem of determining the area of competence of each. Naturally the egalitarian thesis once more gained ground: only full equality was possible in ‘*communio*’. [...]<sup>662</sup>

To correct this, Ratzinger, as Prefect of the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, issued the “*Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*” on 28 May 1992.<sup>663</sup> The document explains:

However, some approaches to ecclesiology suffer from a clearly inadequate awareness of the Church as a *mystery of communion*, especially insofar as they have not sufficiently integrated the concept of *communion* with the concepts of *People of God* and of the *Body of Christ*, and have not given due importance to the relationship between the Church as *communion* and the Church as *sacrament*.<sup>664</sup>

The letter affirms the priority of the universal Church: “The universal Church in her essential mystery is a reality that ontologically and temporally is prior to every particular

"communion" mean? Fundamentally, it is a matter of communion with God through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. This communion is received through the Word of God and the sacraments. Baptism is the door and the foundation of communion in the Church. The Eucharist is the source and the culmination of the whole Christian life (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 11). The communion of the eucharistic Body of Christ signifies and produces, that is, builds up, the intimate communion of all the faithful in the Body of Christ which is the Church (1 Cor 10:16).

For this reason, the ecclesiology of communion cannot be reduced to purely organizational questions or to problems which simply relate to powers. Still, the ecclesiology of communion is also the foundation for order in the Church, and especially for a correct relationship between unity and pluriformity in the Church.

<sup>661</sup> See Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 107.

<sup>662</sup> As cited in Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 107. Cf. As the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985 said: [...it has been the object of “a partial and selective reading” and “a superficial interpretation”]. Final Report, 4. Cf. discussion by René Latourelle in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, 1159.

<sup>663</sup> See Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Communio notio* (Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion) <[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_28051992\\_communio-notio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_28051992_communio-notio_en.html)> [accessed 7 April 2013].

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

Church".<sup>665</sup> The Roman Catholic Church cannot be seen as federation of particular Churches.<sup>666</sup> The reason given is a Patristic notion that the one, unique Church precedes the creation of particular churches and gives birth to them.

Ratzinger discusses different aspects of interpretation when using the notion of communion. It may mean the bond between Christians in a local community, or the relationship between local churches and the universal Church, or the communion of Christ and the Church, or Christ and the person taking part in the Eucharist. This emphasis on Church as communion has been interpreted by Latourelle as overshadowing—even making invisible—the image of the Church as the people of God. I think he is right. His argument is that the image of the Church as the mystery of communion “seems to provide a greater bulwark against a democratic conception of the Church.”<sup>667</sup>

The relation of the universal Church and the particular churches has always been important for Ratzinger. He finds in it the very foundation of the eucharistic sacrifice and the real presence. He emphasises that it is only where the Eucharist is celebrated in legitimate local communities that it results in a true sacrifice and the sacramental presence of Christ.<sup>668</sup> The Eucharist, he holds, is always ordered to the hierarchy of the Church.<sup>669</sup> Valid ministerial orders are connected to the episcopate and thus to the communion with Rome.<sup>670</sup> This tight connection between the Eucharist and the Church was already clear to Ratzinger at the start of

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<sup>665</sup> See *ibid.*, 9. In order to grasp the true meaning of the analogical application of the term *communion* to the particular Churches taken as a whole, one must bear in mind above all that the particular Churches, insofar as they are "part of the one Church of Christ" (38), have a special relationship of "mutual interiority"(39) with the whole, that is, with the universal Church, because in every particular Church "the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and active" (40). For this reason, "the universal Church cannot be conceived as the sum of the particular Churches, or as a federation of particular Churches"(41). It is not the result of the communion of the Churches, but, in its essential mystery, it is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church. Cf. Emery de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI: The Christocentric Shift* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 168. See also *ibid.*, 205-206. "The particular Churches relate to the universal Church as daughters to their mother." For a further discussion see Joseph Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005), 133-44.

<sup>666</sup> *Communio notio*, see note 41 John Paul II, Address to the Bishops of the United States of America, 16-IX-1987, n. 3

<sup>667</sup> Latourelle, *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, 1160.

<sup>668</sup> See Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 293.

<sup>669</sup> See *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>670</sup> See Ratzinger, *Ibid.*, 295-296 ff.

his theological studies. As a young student he read de Lubac's *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*<sup>671</sup> and realized this dynamism for the first time. In the words of de Lubac: "The Church makes the Eucharist, and the Eucharist makes the Church."<sup>672</sup> Ratzinger's understanding of communion comes from the idea of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ and includes a comprehension of the Church as sacrament of salvation. The Eucharist thus comes to be of utmost importance as a foundational element for understanding the nature and purpose of the Church.<sup>673</sup> From this perspective, it is easy to understand Ratzinger's recurrent emphasis on the Last Supper and the words of institution that made the Church come into being.<sup>674</sup> When explaining his ecclesiology he holds that the Church is not only an organisation; it is also the organism of the Holy Spirit and the Body of Christ. Ratzinger used this Christological definition of the Church at the beginning of Vatican II.<sup>675</sup> The Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* explains that because Christ is the Light of the World, the Church is a mirror of his Glory. The Church is a sacrament or a sign and an instrument, and a closely-knit union with God, a union of the whole human race. It "desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission."<sup>676</sup> It is necessary, Ratzinger writes, to bear this in mind in order to understand the Second Vatican Council.

### *The Church as the People of God and Sacrament*

Ratzinger holds that there is a twofold reality of the Church: one is the celebration of the Eucharist in which the body of Christ is truly present, and the other is the reality in which the

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<sup>671</sup> See De Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988), 396, 393, 440f.

<sup>672</sup> See Henri de Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church*, (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), 134.

<sup>673</sup> See Ratzinger, et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 85.

<sup>674</sup> See *ibid.*, 88.

<sup>675</sup> Ratzinger, *Conference at the opening of the Pastoral congress of the diocese of Avesa, (Italy)*, 5-8.

<sup>676</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

Church is the body of Christ.<sup>677</sup>

The presence of Christ is found in the Eucharist where the body of Christ is truly present and in which there is an ontological incorporation of the people of God into the body of Christ.<sup>678</sup> Ratzinger goes further when he formulates his teaching, comparing the Church with the monstrance containing the body of Christ. As such, “the Church as the people of God becomes the mode of God’s being in the world.”<sup>679</sup> The arguments that Ratzinger presents are also found in the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* (LG1) as it explains the mystery of the Church:

Christ is the Light of nations. Because this is so, this Sacred Synod gathered together in the Holy Spirit eagerly desires, by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature, (Cf. Mk. 16:15) to bring the light of Christ to all men, a light brightly visible on the countenance of the Church. Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission.<sup>680</sup>

Ratzinger observes that Vatican II introduced two new keywords “people of God” and “sacrament.”<sup>681</sup> He comments that only “people of God” has had a public acceptance in the Church and that it is perhaps mainly theologians who use the word “sacrament” as a description for the Church. He clarifies what he means by the expression “people of God” by saying, “but if the meaning it was intended to convey also remains esoteric, the isolated concept of ‘people of God’ could become a caricature of conciliar ecclesiology.”<sup>682</sup> He explains that in the Old Testament the people became a “people of God” only at the moment in which they were addressed by God and answered his call, and that this is even more true in the New Testament as the Church is not a people in a natural sense, but an externally very heterogeneous society<sup>683</sup>.

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<sup>677</sup> See the interpretation by de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 183.

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>680</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

<sup>681</sup> Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 54.

<sup>682</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

<sup>683</sup> See *ibid.*, 55.



He says:

This nonpeople can become a people only through him who unites them from above and from within: through communion with Christ. Without this christological mediation it would be presumptuous, if not actually blasphemous, for the Church to designate herself the “people of God”.<sup>684</sup>

Ratzinger states that one of the most essential missions today is to reveal anew the sacramental character of the Church. There is a connection between the union with God and the unity of men and the innermost meaning of the concept of the Church is that it is a “sacrament of unity.”<sup>685</sup> The Church is *communio* because God is communicating with men and men with each other. This makes it a sacrament of salvation and a gift of freedom for humankind.<sup>686</sup> The Church is the celebration of the Eucharist, and the Eucharist is the Church. Ratzinger continues to explain that the Eucharist is the *Sacramentum Christi* and, because the Church is *Eucharistia*, she is *Sacramentum*, the sacrament to which all other sacraments are ordered.<sup>687</sup> On this point, I would add that Ratzinger does not mean that the word is not important. The Eucharist includes the word that is celebrated in the first part of the Eucharist, named the Liturgy of the Word. The content of the unity of the Catholic Church is primarily word and sacrament, and cannot be separated.<sup>688</sup> This unity is built on the remission of sins, reconciliation, contrition, penance, and eucharistic Communion.<sup>689</sup>

In a speech in 2001 - at the Conference at the opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa (Italy) - Ratzinger returns to the discussion of Eucharistic ecclesiology. In this speech, he explains why he holds that the Mass is the form of the Church.<sup>690</sup> According to him, this is because the Mass creates a relationship that is both of multiplicity and of unity. This relationship is unique and not found anywhere else. Ratzinger argues that Christ is present

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<sup>684</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>685</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>686</sup> See *ibid.*, 53.

<sup>687</sup> See *ibid.*, 53.

<sup>688</sup> See *ibid.*, 252.

<sup>689</sup> See Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 324-346; Cf. de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 210-211.

<sup>690</sup> Ratzinger, “Conference at the opening of the Pastoral Congress,” 5-8.

in every Eucharistic celebration. Because Christ is risen and dies no more, he cannot be divided into different parts and so he is everywhere, whole and present in all the legitimate local communities of the Church.<sup>691</sup> In virtue of his power, the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church is brought together, the new People called by God.<sup>692</sup>

This new People received a concrete foundation at the institution of the Eucharist on the evening before the Passion of Christ.<sup>693</sup> It is through Christ who instituted the new covenant, that the covenantal relation to God develops.<sup>694</sup> Jesus Christ draws the disciples into his relation with God.<sup>695</sup> Because of this relation there is, according to Ratzinger, a special call of the Church when Christ's disciples are drawn into the mission of God to reach "the many", the humanity of all places and all times.<sup>696</sup> It is with the communion in the body and blood of Christ that the disciples become a "people".<sup>697</sup> *Lumen Gentium* treats this important call of the Church in depth.<sup>698</sup>

Ratzinger reaches the central point of his argument in his discussion of the Mass. The act of "receiving" is for him a special mark of the Church.<sup>699</sup> He explains that receiving belongs essentially to the Church; it has a relation that can be compared to how "hearing" relates to

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<sup>691</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 26: "This Church of Christ is truly present in all legitimate local communities of the faithful which, united with their pastors, are themselves called Churches in the New Testament. For in their locality these are the new People called by God, in the Holy Spirit and with great trust (cf. 1 Thes. 1,5)... In these communities, though frequently small and poor, or living in the diaspora, Christ is present, and in virtue of His power there is brought together one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church."

<sup>692</sup> See Ratzinger, "Conference at the opening of the Pastoral Congress," Part I: 2. par. 3; 5-8.

<sup>693</sup> Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 88; 100.

<sup>694</sup> Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 29, a. 4. Indeed, "lifted up on the cross and glorified, the Lord Jesus poured forth the Spirit whom he had promised, and through whom he has called and gathered together the people of the New Covenant, which is the Church, into a unity of faith, hope and charity" (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 2/b).

<sup>695</sup> See Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 93.

<sup>696</sup> See Ratzinger, "Conference at the opening of the Pastoral Congress," 5-8. See Part I: 2.: "The Council develops an ecclesiology in which being Catholic, namely being in communion with believers in all places and in all times, is not simply an external element of an organizational form, it represents grace coming from within and is at the same time a visible sign of the grace of the Lord who alone can create unity by breaching countless boundaries."

<sup>697</sup> See Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 93. See also Ratzinger, "The Origin and Essence of the Church," in *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 113-45.

<sup>698</sup> See *Lumen Gentium*, 26.

<sup>699</sup> Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 104.

“faith”. The receiving is the form of a “Sacrament”.<sup>700</sup> The result of his reasoning is that the Eucharist cannot be self-administered; it has to be received from where it already is, and this place is the sacramental community of Christ’s Body moving through history. Ratzinger holds that the reciprocal unity between all who celebrate the Eucharist is an internal unity, not only an external provision added to Eucharistic ecclesiology. External unity, however, gives witness to being Catholic, being in communion with believers in all places and at all times.<sup>701</sup>

In *The Feast of Faith* Ratzinger emphasizes that the receiving cannot be limited to a physical process it “implies belief in the Real Presence”.<sup>702</sup> When Ratzinger writes about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, he sees a difficulty in the absence of a philosophy that deals with the being of things, i.e. an absence of metaphysics. He adds that questions arise as to the function of things, but neither God nor human being is a function.<sup>703</sup>

### *The Eucharist as Sacrifice and Meal*

Connected to the reception of the Eucharist is the question of the relation of sacrifice and meal. Ratzinger points out that sacrifice and meal are inseparably united in the history of religions, and that this also holds for Christianity.<sup>704</sup> His opinion is that the Eucharist involves a meal, but does not have a meal structure.<sup>705</sup> The Eucharist is a blessing and thanksgiving and an *oblatio rationabilis*, a verbal sacrifice to God. It is a self-offering of the mind and heart, expressed in word.<sup>706</sup> Ratzinger explains that in religion it is the sacrifice that facilitates the *communion* with the divinity. This sacrifice gives the possibility for humans to receive back the divinity’s gift in and from the sacrifice.<sup>707</sup> In Christianity this communion is transformed and deepened in many

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<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>701</sup> See Ratzinger, “Conference at the opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa.”

<sup>702</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, 92-93.

<sup>703</sup> See *ibid.*, 93.

<sup>704</sup> See *ibid.*, 93-94.

<sup>705</sup> See *ibid.*, 38. Cf. Emminghaus, *Eucharist*, 23.

<sup>706</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, 36-37.

<sup>707</sup> See *ibid.*, 94.

ways because the sacrifice itself comes from the love of the incarnate God. It is God who gives himself, takes humans up into his action, and enables human beings “to be both gift and recipient.”<sup>708</sup> In the Eucharist the eucharistic prayer is an “entering-in to the Logos, the Father’s Word, into the Logos’ self-surrender to the Father, which in the Cross has also become the surrender of mankind to him.”<sup>709</sup>

Ratzinger emphasizes the need of a priest for the sacrifice to be carried out.<sup>710</sup> To make that which happened at the Last Supper become present in our time there is need for Christ’s words. No human being can use the “I” of Christ - “This is my body – this is my blood” - as his own words, rather there is the need of the authority of Christ to do this.<sup>711</sup> No congregation or congregations can assume this ability of conferring. Ratzinger develops his argument and explains the transmission of the authority, that which can also be called “ordination” and “priesthood.”<sup>712</sup> He continues: “Only Jesus Christ himself, in the ‘sacramental’ form he has committed to the whole Church, can give this authority.”<sup>713</sup> “The word of Christ must be located, as it were, in sacrament; it must be part of the “sacrament of the Church, partaking of an authority which she does not create, but only transmits.”<sup>714</sup> In the Church’s Eucharist, something is happening that is the mystery of God, communicated by Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection. This makes the Eucharist irreplaceable and is the guarantee of its identity.<sup>715</sup> Ratzinger finds this well anchored in the “deposit of faith.”

Thus far I have discussed Ratzinger’s teaching on *Communio-Ecclesiology, the Church as People of God and as Sacrament*. The argumentation began with the outer and inner signs of the Church and concluded that the Eucharist is the uniting element of the Church. The

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<sup>708</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>709</sup> See *ibid.*, 37.

<sup>710</sup> See Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 193; 24; 256.

<sup>711</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, 94.

<sup>712</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>713</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>715</sup> See *ibid.*

communion between the Church and the Eucharist is so dynamic that the Eucharist makes the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist. The importance of this teaching in relation to the real presence of the Eucharist and the communion is that both notions are dependent on the Pasch of Christ and the institution of the Eucharist. The sacramental presence of Christ in the Eucharist can, according to Ratzinger, only exist within the Church founded by Christ, and he concludes that this Church is the Roman Catholic Church. The foundational experience of the people of God as the body of Christ, as the *communio sanctorum*, is found in the Eucharist.<sup>716</sup>

In the next section, I shall develop Ratzinger's arguments on the interconnection between the Church and the Eucharist. He affirms that the Eucharist is the meeting with Christ the Son as a real presence. Ratzinger highlights the meeting with the Risen Christ. Christ is not alone in his divine presence but exists in the Trinitarian communion. The interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion is hidden in the mystery of faith. It involves the Trinitarian communion, because Christ draws human beings to himself and he is one of the persons of the Holy Trinity of God.

### *The Relation between Eucharist and Church*

Ratzinger analyses the avowal that 'the Church makes the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church' in four main arguments. The first argument that Ratzinger builds on is discussed in his book *Behold the Pierced One*.<sup>717</sup> He explains that the Jewish Passover Feast was a community-constituting feast, a family celebration, with its spiritual significance of returning from chaos to sustaining origins. The concept of community-constituting feast is then used to explain that Jesus Christ is the true Passover Lamb and that a community is brought into reality

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<sup>716</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 183. Ratzinger reminds us of Augustine's claim of the Eucharist as foundational experience.

<sup>717</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986).

through his passion and because of the Eucharist.<sup>718</sup> No longer is the centre of the human journey a travel to Jerusalem because the community itself is the sacramental Church.<sup>719</sup>

The second argument is that, because of the communitarian life of Christ in God, when human beings consume his body and blood in the Eucharist they take part in Christ in a metaphysical way.<sup>720</sup> The Eucharist, with its anticipation of the resurrection in the Feast of Faith, is the new covenant between God and humankind, a reality of the communion in blood and life between God and man. The relation between God and humans is so deep that Ratzinger holds that the Church is born from the pierced side of the Lord.<sup>721</sup> This means that all men and women are bound together with the Eucharist, bound together not only with one another but also with Christ.<sup>722</sup> It is this new covenant with Christ that makes them “Church.”<sup>723</sup> The Eucharist is the form of the Church because Christ is sacramentally present in the Mass. This is a unique relationship including both unity and multiplicity “the one unique Church precedes the creation of particular Churches and gives birth to them.”<sup>724</sup> For Ratzinger the celebrations in all legitimate local Churches make the men and women the new People of God.<sup>725</sup>

The third argument is that this metaphysical relationship goes with a relationship with the other partakers, and this brings a societal relationship in this world: a “we” called Christian brotherhood, or the Church.<sup>726</sup> The fellowship (communion) among men is born in the fellowship of the One and Triune God. Ratzinger says, “to meet Christ creates communion with

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<sup>718</sup> See *ibid.*, 105.

<sup>719</sup> See *ibid.*, 104-105.

<sup>720</sup> See Ratzinger, “Conference at the opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa (Italy),” *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition no. 4, part I: 2 par. 1; 5-8. “Clearly the Last Supper anticipates the Cross and the Resurrection and presupposes them, otherwise it would be an empty gesture. This is why the Fathers of the Church could use a beautiful image and say that the Church was born from the pierced side of the Lord, from which flowed blood and water.”

<sup>721</sup> See Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One*, 48; Ratzinger, *God is Near*, 43.

<sup>722</sup> See Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 293

<sup>723</sup> See Ratzinger et al., *The Ratzinger Reader*, 100.

<sup>724</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>725</sup> See Ratzinger, “Conference at the opening.” Part I. The Church, the Body of Christ, 2. Eucharistic Ecclesiology, 3.

<sup>726</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 168.

him and therefore with the Father in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>727</sup>

The fourth argument is that there is then a union between the societal communities with each other and in this the communion in the universal Church always exists. There is the union between the *communio nostra* and the *communio vestra*, between the universal church and the local Church. Here again he stresses the importance of communion with the *cathedra Petri* at Rome.<sup>728</sup> For this emphasis on brotherhood grounded in the Eucharist, Ratzinger refers to Optatus of Mileve, one of the ecclesiological masters and a predecessor of Augustine.

Ratzinger argues that this communion leads to freedom, coming from the Eucharistic celebration, because the Lamb is alive in the Church in the daily celebration of the Eucharist. This freedom is expressed in discipleship, fellowship, and participation in the Church. This freedom is, according to Ratzinger a very personal freedom, as he writes in *Behold the Pierced One*.<sup>729</sup> Ratzinger explains that the Church frees Christians “from ultimate covetousness, free for one another.”<sup>730</sup> This freedom is by Ratzinger expressed as Christian brotherhood. Fellowship must originate in Jesus and reaches its apex in the Eucharist. This theme of Christian brotherhood occurs early in Ratzinger’s writings.<sup>731</sup>

The foundation for fellowship must according to Ratzinger rest on a common belief based on the common fatherhood, expressed in the belief in the triune God. Fellowship evidences itself in the practice of charity, mission, and suffering. Ratzinger does not reject the idea of universal brotherhood, but regards this as part of Christian hope.<sup>732</sup> He considers all the baptised as “belonging fundamentally to the *communio*,” even though they also may be “effectively outside the *communio*’s unity.”<sup>733</sup> Aidan Nichols claims that Ratzinger means that

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<sup>727</sup> See Ratzinger, “Conference at the opening”, 5-8. Part III: The Ecclesiology of Communion.

<sup>728</sup> See Nichols, *The Thought of Benedict XVI*, 40.

<sup>729</sup> See Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One*, 108.

<sup>730</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 169.

<sup>731</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *Christian Brotherhood* (London: Burns & Oates, [1960] 2005).

<sup>732</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 17-171.

<sup>733</sup> See Nichols, *The Thought of Benedict XVI*, 138-39, 191. See Nichols referring to Ratzinger, *Das neue Volk Gottes. Entwürfe zur Ekklesiologie* (Düsseldorf, 1969), 97, 102.

“when we use the word ‘Church’ what we are naming is the *Unterwegssein*, the ‘being-on-the-way’, of Jesus’ message of the Kingdom to all the peoples.”<sup>734</sup>

### ***Christocentric Approach to the Eucharist***

In this section, I follow Ratzinger’s discussion of Christ as the one person who connects liturgy, cosmos, and history.

Ratzinger presents what he considers a commonly held idea that the gods uphold the world and that humans with their cultic gifts feed and sustain the gods.<sup>735</sup> He finds that this discloses an insightful intuition into the meaning of human existence, where man is created as an indispensable link in the circular chain of the universe. Ratzinger holds that in the Old Testament these views are discernible but at the same time transformed.<sup>736</sup>

Ratzinger also states that all worship becomes a participation in the “Pasch” of Christ. It is because of his passing over from divine to human, death to life, that the unity of God and humankind is restored. This is what Christ proclaimed on the first day on Palm Sunday in the temple of Jerusalem: “I, when I am lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men to myself” (Jn 12:32).<sup>737</sup>

God’s love, which is explicit in the redemption through Christ, becomes evident in the Eucharist. Ratzinger speaks of the Eucharist as an expression of the incarnate love of Christ in his encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est*.<sup>738</sup> In *Behold the Pierced One*, he writes that it is by contemplating the pierced side of Christ that it is possible to understand that “God is Love” (1 Jn 4:8).<sup>739</sup> “His death on the Cross is the culmination of that turning of God against himself in

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<sup>734</sup> See Nichols, 154.

<sup>735</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 24-25.

<sup>736</sup> See *ibid.*, 25.

<sup>737</sup> See *ibid.*, 34.

<sup>738</sup> See Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, to the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, Men and Women Religious, and All the Lay Faithful on Christian Love (25 December 2005), 12-13.

<sup>739</sup> When Ratzinger speaks of understanding the faith. He does this in the light of Augustine in a speech on 26 August 2012 at Angelus <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/angelus/2012/documents/hf\\_ben-](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/angelus/2012/documents/hf_ben-)



which he gives himself in order to raise man up and save him.”<sup>740</sup>

Ratzinger often points to the mystery of the Incarnation. The eternal *Logos* becomes true food in the Eucharist. By eating and drinking this food the partakers are drawn into Jesus’ act of self-oblation. Ratzinger discusses the relation between Israel and God under the old law, when the people were standing in the presence of God, and, under the new law, when they take part in a union with God through Jesus’ self-gift of himself as food, in his body and blood. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI returns often to this aspect of union. He states that the partakers of the gifts become “one body” completely joined in a single existence.<sup>741</sup> Sharing in the same bread transforms the partakers into Christ and into communion with each other. Thus, this, the sacramental presence, is an active union.

Ratzinger warns against considering the Eucharist as a mere meal.<sup>742</sup> The reason, says Ratzinger, is that Christ instituted the new reality of Christian worship in the framework of a *Jewish* (Passover) meal.<sup>743</sup> The important point is that “the Eucharist refers back to the Cross” and thus to a transformation of the old temple sacrifice “into worship of God that is in harmony with *logos*.”<sup>744</sup> Ratzinger emphasises that it was this reality, not the meal as such, that Christ commanded the disciples to repeat.

In his 2005 inauguration homily Pope Benedict refers to the importance of meeting the living God in Christ, to know him and to speak to others of friendship with him. The Catholic faith involves a relationship with Christ. He points out that it is only where God is encountered

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xvi\_ang\_20120826\_it.html > [accessed 13 January 2013]. Ratzinger says: “In a beautiful commentary about this passage [John 6:68-69], Saint Augustine wrote: ‘See how Peter, by the gift of God and the renewal of the Holy Spirit, understood Him. How other than because he believed? ‘You have the words of eternal life.’ For You have eternal life in the ministration of Your body and blood. ‘And we have believed and have known.’ Not have known and believed, but ‘believed and have known.’ For we believed in order to know; for if we wanted to know first, and then to believe, we should not be able either to know or to believe. What have we believed and known? ‘That You are Christ, the Son of God: ‘that is, that You are that very eternal life, and that You give in Your flesh and blood only that which You are.’ (Tractate on John, 27:9).

<sup>740</sup> See Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, 12.

<sup>741</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 242.

<sup>742</sup> See Ratzinger, *God is Near Us*, 44. Cf. Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, 51.

<sup>743</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, 33-60 see especially page 50: “There is no opposition between ‘meal’ and ‘sacrifice’; they belong inseparably together in the new sacrifice of the Lord.”

<sup>744</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 78.

that life truly begins.<sup>745</sup> Jesus Christ is for Benedict XVI a personal path to knowledge and happiness, and this notion is well developed in his book *Jesus of Nazareth*.<sup>746</sup>

### *Exitus and Reditus*

In order to describe the relationship between liturgy, cosmos, and history, Ratzinger uses the categories of *exitus* and *reditus*.<sup>747</sup> *Exitus*, he says, is the Creator's free act of creation. God has given the human being a free will, and this gives the possibility for humankind to respond in freedom and love.<sup>748</sup> *Reditus* as a "return" is the act of an answer in freedom to God's love. It accepts the gift of love and ensures a dialogue of love, "that wholly new kind of unity that love alone can create."<sup>749</sup> "This *reditus* is how Christians understand God being 'all in all.'"<sup>750</sup> God gave humankind the freedom to say no and to rupture the relationship and thus break the bond of *exitus* and *reditus*, but when the bond was broken humankind had no way to return by its own power. The New Covenant in Christ opened the possibility of a return. In his explanation of *exitus* and *reditus*, Ratzinger's theology is both cosmic and covenant-centred.

The sacrificial mystery is for Ratzinger a "sacrifice" in that its essence is a returning to love and, therefore, to divinisation of human beings. The redemption brings with it a new aspect of "healing of wounded freedom, atonement, purification, [and] deliverance from estrangement." Ratzinger emphasises Augustine's teaching that "the love-transformed humanity, divinisation of creation and the surrender of all things to God" is the "true" sacrifice and is the *civitas Dei*.<sup>751</sup> As there was no way for humankind to turn back to God with its own

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<sup>745</sup> See Benedict XVI, *Easter Sunday Homily*, 23 March 2008  
<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20050424\\_inizio-pontificato\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050424_inizio-pontificato_en.html)> [accessed September 9 2011].

<sup>746</sup> See Ratzinger/ Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007).

<sup>747</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 26-34.

<sup>748</sup> See *ibid.*, 32.

<sup>749</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>750</sup> See *ibid.*, 32-33.

<sup>751</sup> See *ibid.*, 28.

power, humankind needed a redeemer.

Ratzinger refers to how the Fathers found the answer in the parable of the Lost Sheep. The shepherd who carries the sheep home is the Logos, the eternal Word, the Son of God incarnate. The *reditus* becomes possible because of the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ. With love, he gives himself as a gift and a new creation occurs, which is the restoration of creation to its true identity.<sup>752</sup>

### *The Eucharist as a Sacrificial Mystery of Redemption*

In this section I follow Ratzinger's discussion that the mystery of incarnation and the institution of the Eucharist makes it possible for the triune God and humans to enter a relationship with each other. Both the incarnation and the Eucharist are gifts from God to humankind and provide the possibility for humankind to give an answer of acceptance and enter into worship in the Eucharistic celebration.

I also survey Ratzinger's teaching on the incarnation. He interprets this with the term *logos* – the Word in the beginning, creative reason and love. He explains that this concept of *logos* forms the core of Christology, of faith in Christ and the “indivisibility of faith in God and in his incarnate Son...”<sup>753</sup> Christ's divinity is a mystery and is a way to understand why God is able to be close to human beings. God's presence is connected to this God-with-us, and God is not perceived as a God of distance.<sup>754</sup>

I shall also treat some aspects from Benedict XVI's post-Synodal apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, on the Love of God expressed in the Eucharist. A sacrificial mystery takes place when the Church through the Eucharistic prayer<sup>755</sup> enters into the prayer of Jesus

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<sup>752</sup> See *ibid.*, 34.

<sup>753</sup> Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 28.

<sup>754</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>755</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 35. The priest, or the deacon in the Eastern rites, introduces the Eucharistic Prayer with the invitation: “Lift up your hearts.” The Apostolic Constitutions state: “Turned towards the Lord, with fear and trembling we stand to offer the oblation.” In the words of St. John Chrysostom, this dialogue serves “to

Christ, the Logos, who is the Word of the Father, and into the Logos's self-surrender to the Father. When Christ surrendered on the cross, Ratzinger explains, it was also the surrender of humankind to God.<sup>756</sup> This redemption of humankind took place because Christ's incarnation made it possible for him to take on the sin of human beings, and this, Ratzinger insists, continues in the Mystery of the Eucharist. In other words, Ratzinger states that "through the Eucharist, Christ the Redeemer and High Priest continues the work of humankind's redemption in, with and through His Church."<sup>757</sup> Ratzinger regards the liturgy as referring to the work of Christ primarily as Jesus' death and Resurrection. The Liturgy is God's action and, as such, it is beyond history. With this argumentation, Ratzinger arrives at seeing the Eucharist as a sacrificial, paschal mystery involving cosmos and history.

Finally, I follow Ratzinger's argumentation on how the institution narrative, the real presence and the sacrifice belong together. With this section I reach the central argument on the sacrifice made by Ratzinger that I intend to use in my evaluation of his teaching on the Eucharist.

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present our souls upright before God and not recumbent, as they are inclined to be because of the everyday affairs of life...Consider who is standing next to you; you are in the company of someone who is about to call upon God, in the company of the Cherubim...No one should participate in these sacred, mystic hymns without fervour...Each one is to uproot from his spirit all that belongs to earth and transfer all to heaven. He is to think of himself as next to the very throne of glory and flying with the Seraphim so as to offer to God the holiest hymn of majesty and splendour. For this reason we are called upon at this moment to compose ourselves..., namely, to stand with 'fear and trembling' (Phil 2:12), with an upright, attentive spirit. "To raise up the spirit is the meaning of the word *anáfora*: the act of all believers to lift up their hearts. The Gifts are scarcely carried to the altar on earth, when they are lifted to the altar of heaven, an action which takes place in tranquillity, in the imperturbable peace of heaven. Furthermore, the sacrifice is offered for one purpose: love and mercy. Thus, it is made acceptable in the Lord's sight. It is the sacrifice of praise, because it exalts the Lord's love.

*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 36. The faithful respond in unison: "It is right and just." St. John Chrysostom observes: "rendering thanks, the Eucharist, is a communal act: the priest is not the only one to render thanks, all the people take part. The priest begins, and immediately afterwards the faithful give their assent: 'It is right and just.' After that, the priest begins the act of thanksgiving, the Eucharist." This expresses the participation of the People of God, its movement towards the heavenly Church, culminating in the Sanctus, the hymn of victory (*epiníko*), a blending of the angel's hymn in the vision of Isaiah and the acclamation of the people of Jerusalem to the Lord, who entered the Holy City to give himself freely to his passion.

At the conclusion of the anaphora, the faithful respond, "Amen" to the doxology and "with this acclamation they make their own everything said by the priest."

<sup>756</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, 37.

<sup>757</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 242. See also John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne, *The Essential Pope Benedict XVII: His Central Writings and Speeches*, San Francisco: Harper, 2007, 171f.

### *The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate*

Ratzinger's *communio ecclesiology* and eucharistic ecclesiology has been highlighted in the so called "Ratzinger/Kasper debate." This debate concerns the theological significance of the particular or local churches and the universal Church. This relationship is a vital question today and has been considered of utmost importance among Roman Catholic theologians.<sup>758</sup> The debate started as a reaction by Walter Kasper on the "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion" issued on May 28 1992 by the CDF.<sup>759</sup> The letter has been interpreted by Kasper as not being in correspondence to how the relationship was presented by Vatican II because of an emphasis of the ontological priority of the universal Church that is added by the CDF.<sup>760</sup> Kasper finds a more balanced discussion on the universal Church and particular Church presented in Vatican II<sup>761</sup> than CDF's firmer accent on the universal Church and the apostolic succession with the bishop of Rome as the successor of the apostle Peter. When Kasper published his opinion in an essay on the Office of the Bishop in 1999, this resulted in a series of exchanges between the two theologians.<sup>762</sup> Kasper had the starting point as a bishop caring for the local Church and Ratzinger on the other

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<sup>758</sup> See Kilian McDonnell, "The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate: the Universal and the Local Churches", in *Theological Studies*, 63 (2002) 227-250, see especially 227; Kilian McDonnell, "Our Dysfunctional Church." In *The Tablet* [London] 225 (September 8, 2001): 1260-1261; See also Hermann J. Pottmeyer, "Primat und bischöfliche Kollegialität in der Eucharistischen Communio-Ekklesiologie Joseph Ratzingers" in Frank Meier-Hamidi and Ferdinand Schumacher, eds *Der Theologe Joseph Ratzinger* (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), 100-118.

<sup>759</sup> See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, 28 May 1992  
<[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_28051992\\_communions-notio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_28051992_communions-notio_en.html)> [accessed 20 February 2013].

<sup>760</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. It [the universal church] is not the result of the communion of the Churches, but it, in its essential mystery, it is a reality *ontologically and temporally* prior to every *individual* particular Church."

<sup>761</sup> Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 26.

<sup>762</sup> Walter Kasper, "On the Church," *America* vol. 184, no. 14 (23-30 April 2001), 8-14; Joseph Ratzinger, "The Local Church and the Universal Church: A Response to Walter Kasper," *America* (November 19, 2001): 7-22. For a survey of this discussion see Kilian McDonnell, "The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate: The Universal Church and Local Churches," *Theological Studies* 63 (2002): 227-50; Medard Kehl, *Stimmen der Zeit* 128 (2003): 219-232; Gerard Mannion "Understanding the Church: Fundamental Ecclesiology" in Ratzinger et al. *The Ratzinger Reader*, notes 7-8. Note 7 points out that "Ratzinger in the view of many, had famously changed his mind on this issue, given the position he took in the very first issue of *Concilium* – "the Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality", in *Concilium*, vol. 1. Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist, 1964, 39-67." See also Emery de Gaál "An Ecclesiological Dispute at the Turn of the Millennium" in *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 199-208; Hermann J. Pottmeyer, "Primat und bischöfliche Kollegialität in der Eucharistischen Communio-Ekklesiologie Joseph Ratzingers" in Frank Meier-Hamidi and Ferdinand Sshumacher, eds *Der Theologe Joseph Ratzinger* (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), 100-118.

hand was cardinal and prefect of the CDF. The argument presented by Kasper was that Ratzinger reversed the priority between the local Church and the universal Church.<sup>763</sup> He insisted on that: “The local church is neither the province nor a department of the universal church; it is the church at a given place. The local bishop is not the delegate of the pope but is sent by Jesus Christ. He is given personal responsibility by Christ. He receives the fullness of power through his sacramental consecration the power that he needs to govern his diocese. This is the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.”<sup>764</sup> Central to Kasper’s unease was the fact that he found that there had been a trend toward centralisation that returned after the Council and not a development of a decentralisation of the bishop’s office, which Kasper had expected.<sup>765</sup> Kasper also referred to a lecture in Graz in 1979 at the ecumenical gathering where Cardinal Ratzinger stated: “What was possible in the church for a thousand years cannot be impossible today.”<sup>766</sup> Kasper and many others interpreted this, as there is no need for “more recognition of the doctrine of primacy than was known and practiced in the first millennium.”<sup>767</sup> At the heart of the discussion that followed Kasper’s article in 1999 was a conclusion that Ratzinger grounded his theory of the ontological primacy in a thesis about the pre-existence of the Church.<sup>768</sup> Kasper holds that a pre-existence of the Church cannot be contested but that this is not an argument of the ontological primacy of the universal Church.<sup>769</sup> Kasper insists “on the importance of simultaneity of the local with the universal Church, which saves the universal Church from becoming a logical construct.”<sup>770</sup> The result of the debates resulted in that in 2001 Ratzinger reframed his statement by stating an “ontological” primacy instead of a “theological” primacy of the universal Church. This might have been better a better way, Ratzinger holds, to

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<sup>763</sup> Walter Kasper, “On the Church,” *America* vol. 184, no. 14 (23-30 April 2001), 8-14.

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>765</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>767</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>768</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>769</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>770</sup> McDonnell “The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate”, 245.

start his earlier argumentation.<sup>771</sup> “Ratzinger’s ‘making over’ of his thesis of the ontologically priority of the universal Church into ‘the priority of inner unity’<sup>772</sup> solved the dispute and both theologians came to an agreement on a new formulation. Kasper demands that an “ecclesial unilateralism” should be abandoned and expression of “mutual interiority.” He highlights the simultaneity and perichoresis. “Because of simultaneity and perichoresis, one is already in the universal Church when one is in local church. Simultaneity and perichoresis has everything to do with the pre-existence of the Church, and with the denial of the ontological priority.”<sup>773</sup> For de Gaál, “Kasper merely critiques the temporal and ontological originality of the universal Church. According to divine will, in his understanding, the two are indissolubly united and brought forth simultaneously by the divine Spirit of Jesus Christ.”<sup>774</sup> *Lumen Gentium* 23 states that the one Church of Christ comes into being both in and from the particular churches “*Ecclesiis particularibus, ad imaginem Ecclesiae universalis formatis in quibus et ex quibus una et unica Ecclesia catholica existit.*”<sup>775</sup> What Kasper does is actually to add the formula “*Ecclesia in et ex Ecclesiis*” (the Church in and from the churches) to “*Ecclesiae in et ex Ecclesia*” (The churches are in and from the Church).<sup>776</sup> Both Ratzinger and Kasper agree that the formula is reversible and that there is some kind of mutual precedence. This has importance for the discussion on the baptism and the Eucharist. Ratzinger starting from *Lumen Gentium* 7 passes from Baptism to the Eucharist and states that the Eucharist does not have its origin in the local Church and does not end there either. The Eucharist always comes from the outside, the *extra nos* is vital as this points to the origin of the Eucharist in the Lord. “The community

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<sup>771</sup> De Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 208.

<sup>772</sup> McDonnell “The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate”, 245.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>774</sup> de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 206.

<sup>775</sup> *Lumen Gentium* 23. The first paragraph reads: This collegial union is apparent also in the mutual relations of the individual bishops with particular churches and with the universal Church. The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible principle and foundation of unity of both the bishops and of the faithful. The individual bishops, however, are the visible principle and foundation of unity in their particular churches, fashioned after the model of the universal Church, in and from which churches comes into being the one and only Catholic Church. For this reason the individual bishops represent each his own church, but all of them together and with the Pope represent the entire Church in the bond of peace, love and unity.”

<sup>776</sup> de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 206.

always receives the Lord through the mediation of the one Church.”<sup>777</sup> The Eucharist comes via the apostolic succession. Kasper does not object to this.

In conclusion, the key to the debate is seems to McDonnell to be “the simultaneity of the universal Church and local churches, and their perichoretic relationship, one of mutual inclusion, reciprocity.”<sup>778</sup>

### *Eucharistic Sacrifice*

Many of the arguments given by Ratzinger confirm my thesis of the centrality of the eucharistic sacrifice, emphasizing the sacrifice as a free gift of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, he develops an argumentation on how sacrifice, real presence, and communion belong together. It is also clear that he considers the Eucharist a unified action. He also gives a glimpse of ecumenical hope in his treatment of the *todah* sacrifice.

The sacrifice of the Eucharist is for Ratzinger at the heart of the Liturgy because the redemption through Christ is actualised in the sacrifice of the Mass. Ratzinger shows how the sacrifice of Christ can be understood from the fact of the Incarnation: it is through Mary, who made her body available for the Holy Spirit.<sup>779</sup> The Holy Spirit is thus present already from the Incarnation. The Word became flesh, and this, Ratzinger points out, is counter to every cultural model, and is absurd and strange for the Jews, the Greek and for modern men and women, the Logos becomes *sarx* and is the spiritual nourishment.<sup>780</sup> But Jesus says, “the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”<sup>781</sup> Ratzinger reminds of the saying of the Fathers that “the Logos has contracted, has become small”, and that “the immeasurable Word, the entire fullness of Holy Scripture, has contracted itself within the compass of this, one sentence, which

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<sup>777</sup> McDonnell “The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate,” 238.

<sup>778</sup> *Ibid*, 247.

<sup>779</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 14. Mary agrees to do the will of God Heb 10:5-7; Ps 40:6-8.

<sup>780</sup> See *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>781</sup> See Jn 6:51.



gathers together the law and the prophets.”<sup>782</sup> Ratzinger sees the entire Gospel contained in one sentence: “A body have you prepared for me.”<sup>783</sup> In a few words, says Ratzinger, Christ “expresses at the same time his self-giving sacrifice, the mystery of the Cross and the mystery of the paschal sacrament that derives from it.”<sup>784</sup> For Ratzinger the Eucharist is foremost a feast of faith. As the source and summit in the life and mission of the Church, it is the most central act. It is the sacrament of charity in which there is a personal meeting with Christ and is, as Ratzinger points out the personal gift that Jesus Christ makes of himself.<sup>785</sup> The Eucharist is a sacrifice, the presentation of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross.”<sup>786</sup> Ratzinger takes care to point out that the Eucharist is a sacrifice and a meal where both death and life become a present reality at the same time. Christ’s mysterious death and his resurrection are present at the same time in the eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>787</sup> Ratzinger affirms that it has cost Christ his life to offer this mystery where death is celebrated as the feast of life, the resurrection made present. With the resurrection being present in the Eucharist the conclusion that Ratzinger draws is that the Eucharist is active in the transformation of the world.<sup>788</sup>

Ratzinger maintains that the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and the celebration of this in the Eucharist are an offering, a free gift. Human beings are free to accept this offer; they are not forced to accept it. Ratzinger starts to explain this by stating that the words that are used in the eucharistic celebration, “This is my Body, this is my Blood”, are taken from the Israelite language of sacrifice and indicated the gifts offered in sacrifice to God in the Temple.<sup>789</sup> What Christ is doing with these words is giving himself as the true and ultimate sacrifice. It is the

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<sup>782</sup> Cf. H.U. Balthasar, “das Wort verdichtet sich”, *Internationale Katholisch Zeitschrift Communio*, 6 (1977): 297-400. See also Augustine, *Tractatus in Johannem* 17:7 f. (CCL 36, 147 f.).

<sup>783</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 21. See Heb 10:5; Ps 40.

<sup>784</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 21.

<sup>785</sup> See Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (22 February 2007), No.1.

<sup>786</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 44.

<sup>787</sup> See *ibid.*, 44.

<sup>788</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>789</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 32, see Ratzinger’s reference to J. Jeremias, *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu*, 3d. ed. (Göttingen, 1960).

fulfilment of the Old Testament, the returning to love and divinisation that could not be reached in the Old Testament but was now possible.<sup>790</sup> The Old Testament is covenant *berith* but New Testament is communion *koinonia*.<sup>791</sup>

Ratzinger continues his discussion with the words "which is given for you" and my blood, "which is shed for you and for many."<sup>792</sup> The words "for you and for many" are all important for Ratzinger. He explains that the Lord died for all, but God accepts man's freedom and does not force anyone to be saved. This is true even if this freedom is used to reject God and thus set a limit to salvation. Thus, God's desire to save all human beings does not necessarily involve the salvation of all men and women because they have free will to refuse his salvation.<sup>793</sup> Ratzinger finds this aspect very important because Christ's redemptive act includes all human beings but might not involve the actual salvation of all men. The words of the institution at Christ's Last Supper - *pro multis* - are to be interpreted as referring to "the many," as used in the Eucharistic Prayer in the English translation of the Mass. This is for Ratzinger the correct way of interpreting the unique nature of the Eucharist.<sup>794</sup>

Ratzinger takes several steps in his argumentation on how the institution narrative, the Real Presence and the Sacrifice belong together. He starts by saying that the death of Christ on the cross gives the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper its meaning. The words of the institution of the Last Supper alone are not sufficient because they had to be given content by Christ's actual death.<sup>795</sup> Furthermore, the death would not be satisfactory if the Resurrection had not come about. It is the Resurrection that gives the spoken words divine authority. This is why Christ becomes truly present in the Eucharist. There is a significant unity between the

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<sup>790</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 32.

<sup>791</sup> Ratzinger, *Behold The Pierced One*, 85.

<sup>792</sup> See *ibid.*, 33.

<sup>793</sup> See *ibid.*, 37.

<sup>794</sup> For further argumentation see Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*.

<sup>795</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 43.

institution narrative and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>796</sup> Christ, the Paschal Lamb, is the second person in the Trinity (Jn 14:6), and he builds the real connection with the living God.<sup>797</sup> This is one way in which Ratzinger explains the real presence of Christ. Christ draws all men to himself (Jn 12:32) and is always head and body, *caput et corpus*, open to all. Christ identifies himself with the people celebrating, and this is to such an extent that:

...our sins belong to him and his being to us: *he truly accepts us and takes us up, so that we ourselves become active with his support and alongside with him, so that we ourselves cooperate and join in the sacrifice with him, participating in the mystery ourselves.* Thus our own suffering, our own hoping and loving, can also become fruitful, in the new heart he has given us.<sup>798</sup>

Ratzinger concludes that *Eucharistia*, as the transformation of existence into thanksgiving, is the true heart of the Mass and that it is *rationabile obsequium*, an offering in verbal form.<sup>799</sup> He says:

Thus the canon, the “true sacrifice,” is the word of the Word; in it speaks the one who, as Word, is life. By putting these words into our mouths, letting us pronounce them with him, he permits us and enables us to make the offering with him: his words become our words, his worship our worship, his sacrifice our sacrifice.<sup>800</sup>

Ratzinger thus emphasises that the Eucharist canon is sacrifice in verbal form. In *God is Near Us* it is obvious that Ratzinger explains the Mass as sacrifice as depending on the role that Christ has given to the words of the minister. Christ died alone, but since his resurrection he does not stand alone; here Ratzinger echoes the Church Fathers: Christ is “always *caput et corpus*, head and body, open to us all.”<sup>801</sup> Ratzinger’s position can be interpreted in such a way to mean that in this verbal sacrifice heaven and the Church meet, then and now, uniting into one reality.<sup>802</sup> Christ, according to Ratzinger, makes human beings able to cooperate and join in

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<sup>796</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>797</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 255.

<sup>798</sup> Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 50.

<sup>799</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 51.

<sup>800</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>801</sup> See *ibid.*, 50.

<sup>802</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 260.

the sacrifice alongside Christ.<sup>803</sup> As always, Ratzinger affirms that an ordained priest has to lend his voice to Christ at the consecration. He holds that the Canon of the Roman Mass is developed directly from the Jewish prayers of thanksgiving; it is the direct descendant and continuation of this prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper and is thereby the heart of the Eucharist. It is the genuine vehicle of the sacrifice, since thereby Christ transformed his death into verbal form – into a prayer – and, in so doing, changed the world.<sup>804</sup>

Ratzinger declares that the Eucharist, with its anticipation of the resurrection, is the “feast of faith”, the new covenant between God and humankind. In this way, they take part in the new covenant with Christ, and that makes them “Church.”<sup>805</sup> Ratzinger considers the Eucharist the constitution of the Church. The real presence of Christ at the celebration of the Eucharist is a unique relationship, including both unity and multiplicity. “This Church of Christ is truly present in all legitimate local communities of the faithful which, united with their pastors, are themselves called Churches in the New Testament.”<sup>806</sup> For Ratzinger the celebrations in all these local Churches make the men and women the new People of God. The first covenant was a covenant between God and the people of Israel and the second covenant is the new covenant in the body and blood of Christ. By partaking in the surrender of Christ on the Cross, believers and the Church enter into the Father’s Logos.<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>803</sup> Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 50. “The magnitude of Christ’s achievement consists precisely in his not remaining someone else, over and against us, who might thus relegate us once more to a merely passive rôle; he does not merely bear with us; rather, he bears us up; he identifies himself with us to such an extent that our sins belong to him and his being to us: “He truly accepts us and takes us up, so that we ourselves become active with his support and alongside him, so that we ourselves cooperate and join in the sacrifice with him, participating in the mystery ourselves.” Thus our own life and suffering, our own hoping and loving, can also become fruitful, in the new heart he has given us.

<sup>804</sup> See *ibid.*, 49.

<sup>805</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>806</sup> See Ratzinger, “Conference at the opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa,” 5-8. Part III, *The Ecclesiology of Communion*.

<sup>807</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 255.

### *The Todah Sacrifice*

Ratzinger writes in his book *The Feast of Faith* that Hartmut Gese, in his article on the origin of the Lord's Supper, has given a completely new perspective.<sup>808</sup> Todah is a thanksgiving for a particular circumstance, such as when a person is rescued to life. It is not a mere sacrificial rite. The crucial point is that *todah* presupposes a narrative of thanksgiving.<sup>809</sup> It both confesses God to be the deliverer of the person and his/her own involvement. It is the inauguration of a new existence.<sup>810</sup> Ratzinger cites Gese: "Here we have a unity which embraces a service of the word and a ritual meal, praise and sacrifice. The sacrifice cannot be misunderstood as a 'gift' to God; rather it is a way of 'honoring' the Deliverer. And the fact that the rescued man is able to celebrate 'life restored' in the sacred meal is itself the gift of God."<sup>811</sup> Ratzinger, citing Gese, explains further: "The *toda* is not restricted to a bloody sacrifice of flesh but also embraces the unbloody offering of bread; *toda* is the only form of sacrifice which is concerned with unleavened bread. Thus in the context of *toda*, bread and wine acquire a special significance; the one becomes part of the sacrifice itself, the other plays a constitutive role in proclamation."<sup>812</sup> The great Christological psalms, for example 117; 69; 40:1-12, 22, link death and the saving activity of the offerer, the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is *todah*, the real fulfilment of the psalms. "The Lord's Supper is the *toda* of the Risen One."<sup>813</sup> Ratzinger can, in the *todah* sacrifice, see a new profundity in the complete Catholic inheritance, as well as find a receptivity to Luther's central intentions. Ratzinger explains that a synthesis is possible because the Old Testament itself wished to be fully understood in the New Testament made

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<sup>808</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, discusses the todah sacrifice 51-60, on pages 51-52, 60 he is referring to Hartmut Gese, *Die Herkunft des Herrenmahls* in "Zur biblischen Theologie" (Munich 1977), 107-27. See also H. Gese, "The Origins of the Lord's Supper," in *Essays on Biblical theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1981), 117-140; H. Gese, "Psalm 22 and the New Testament," *Theology Today* 18, 237-243.

<sup>809</sup> For a clear explanation see Stephen Pimentel, "The Todah Sacrifice as Pattern for the Eucharist" in *Inside the Vatican*, Urbi et Orbi Communications, New Hope, KY, March 2008, 44-47.

<sup>810</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986) 54-55. When citing Ratzinger I use *toda* as he does.

<sup>811</sup> See *ibid.*, 55.

<sup>812</sup> See *ibid.*, 56. Has a reference to H. Gese, "Die Herkunft des Herrenmahls" in *Zur Biblischen Theologie* (Munich 1977), 119.

<sup>813</sup> See *ibid.*, 57.

possible in Christ. “The whole Old Testament is a movement of transition to Christ, a waiting for the One in whom all its words would come true, in whom the ‘Covenant’ would attain fulfilment as the New Testament.”<sup>814</sup> He concludes: “Here too, finally, we can see the meaning of the Real Presence and the entire theology of the Easter worship of Christianity against the biblical background of salvation history.”<sup>815</sup>

### ***Eucharistic Presence***

When Ratzinger speaks about the real presence of Christ, he grounds it in the concept of union. In his book *God Is Near Us* he uses three steps to explain why he believes in the real presence and how it truly signifies the full force of bodily presence. He starts with the text of John 6:48-59, where Jesus says that he is the bread of life and that man may eat this bread and not die. Christ repeats three times that those who eat his body “will live for ever,” “have eternal life” and will “live for ever.” The people of God in the Old Testament were close to God through God’s speaking to Moses. However, in the New Testament God has come so close to his people that there is no possibility of coming closer because he has taken flesh, become a man, and has remained in the mystery of the transubstantiated bread, in “our hands and our hearts.”<sup>816</sup> To make his statement unmistakable Ratzinger first presents his thesis that the “is” in “this is my Body and Blood” really mean a corporal union in a sacramental event. This event culminates in a reality of fusion when Christ takes hold of the bodily existence of the communicants. One of Ratzinger’s arguments is that the “is” in this context is like a note in a piece of music. The significance comes from an interrelating of the notes uniting to form one piece of music. To explain the kind of oneness of the real presence of the Lord Ratzinger also refers to the observation of Genesis 2:24 that man and wife shall become one. He also uses 1Cor 6:12 to

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<sup>814</sup> See *ibid.*, 58.

<sup>815</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>816</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 75.

explain that united to the Lord means becoming one spirit with him. In receiving Christ in communion a person is taken out of himself/herself and assimilated to Christ and becomes one with him and, through him with the fellowship of the brethren and sisters.<sup>817</sup> The presence of Jesus Christ is a power that draws men and women to Christ.<sup>818</sup>

As a second step, Ratzinger treats the theme of how the body of Christ can share itself and go beyond time and space. The possibility comes from the resurrection: the border of death is overstepped, and the body is no longer a limit, but the capability for communion remains. Ratzinger discusses the importance of the person not to be closed in him/herself but to open up his/her inner self. The body and the person are intimately bound together. This is seen in the language of the Bible, where “this is my Body” means the whole person existent in bodily form. The reason why Christ’s body can be shared out is that it is a body existing in love for others, “since it is a matter of this person and because it is from its heart an opening-up, a self-giving person, it can then be shared out.”<sup>819</sup>

As a third step, Ratzinger explains that when the Eucharist has reached the summit of communion the “I” in the Mass becomes a “we”. The communion with Christ starts with the “I” entering the contact with the majesty of the living God, and is simultaneously an adoration.<sup>820</sup> Sacramental communion must always be spiritual communion, and include a freeing of oneself from one’s own self thereby discovering human fellowship.<sup>821</sup> It follows from this is that communion involves the courage to set out and leave the individual self, abandoning oneself to Christ and entering the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man. The act of spiritual sacrifice of the “I” may be seen as the first part of Communion, adoring Christ before communicating and entering the “we.”<sup>822</sup> Ratzinger puts it

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<sup>817</sup> See *ibid.*, 76-78.

<sup>818</sup> See *ibid.*, 78, see footnote 3, Augustine, *Confessions*, bk. 7, 10:16.

<sup>819</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 78-81.

<sup>820</sup> See *ibid.*, 79-82.

<sup>821</sup> See *ibid.*, 83.

<sup>822</sup> See *ibid.*, 82.

like this because he wants to assert the Liturgy not only as a communal celebration but also as a fellowship that requires the person. It is clear that Ratzinger considers the eucharistic Liturgy one whole celebration, not parts adding to each other.

### ***Eucharistic Communion***

#### *The Eucharistic Communion as inseparable from the Church as Communion*

Ratzinger treats the community structure of the Church in his dissertation on Augustine (1954) and develops it further in a 1992 letter to the bishops of the Catholic Church he writes as Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The letter emphasises a relationship between the invisible and visible communion:

As an invisible reality, [ecclesial communion] is the communion of each human being with the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit, and with the others who are fellow sharers in the divine nature, in the passion of Christ, in the same faith and in the same spirit. In the Church on earth, there is a relationship between the invisible communion and the visible communion in the teachings of the Apostles, in the sacraments and in the hierarchical order. [...] This link between the invisible and visible elements of ecclesial communion constitutes the Church as the Universal Sacrament of Salvation.<sup>823</sup>

From Augustine and other Fathers of the Church, Ratzinger finds a dualism containing both the mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ and her historical call as the People of God. From the concept of the Eucharist, Ratzinger explains how the idea of the Church as “Body of Christ” that captures the New Testament economy of salvation may be combined with the “People of God” that includes the people of the Old Testament. Ratzinger finds in the Church a dilemma, the dualism from “inside” (*Innen*) and from “outside” (*Außen*).<sup>824</sup> However, it is in this dilemma that Ratzinger finds the Eucharist the uniting element. “The people of God

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<sup>823</sup> *Communio* notio, art. 4.

<sup>824</sup> See Hermann J. Pottmeyer, “Primat und bischöfliche Kollegialität in der Eucharistischen Communio-Ekklesiologie Joseph Ratzingers” in Frank Meier-Hamidi, Ferdinand Schumacher (Ed), *Der Theologe Joseph Ratzinger* (Freiburg in Breisgau: Herder, 2007), 102.



are *communio sanctorum* by virtue of the participation in the Eucharistic Lord.”<sup>825, 826</sup>

As Ratzinger explains it, the “I-Thou relationship”, that is the relationship between God and the believer, is possible and credible only when it includes the “we of the Church.”<sup>827</sup> Guardini, by whom Ratzinger was deeply influenced, laid great emphasis on the communal aspect, and said “the Liturgy does not say ‘I’, but ‘we’.”<sup>828</sup> It is only by becoming one with the Church that man becomes one with Christ.”<sup>829</sup> Ratzinger also underscores that the Christian is called to unity with the body of Christ, and it is through the Eucharist that the person leaves the private sphere to enter into unity with the body of the Church. This is exactly what he flagged with the epigraph to his doctoral thesis: *unus panis – unum corpus sumus multi*.

### **Conclusion: Sacrifice, Real Presence and Communion in the Theology of Ratzinger**

I have followed Ratzinger’s argumentation on why the Eucharist is a sacrifice – the sacramental form of the sacrifice of the Cross. This sacramental sacrifice was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, Ratzinger holds, together with Christ’s admonition to followers to repeat it. I find it confirmed that Ratzinger holds that the sacramental sacrifice is necessary and central to the celebration of the Eucharist.

However, there is also the connection between the Eucharist and the Church, which likewise was instituted at the Last Supper. The Church was founded on the apostles; the Roman Catholic Church is an apostolic Church. It is within this Church that the Eucharist is celebrated. The Church is a People of God and a Sacrament of Christ. Ratzinger’s eucharistic theology expresses both ecclesiology as well as Christology. Jesus Christ is the focal point of all

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<sup>825</sup> See Nichols, *The Thought of Benedict XVI: An Introduction to the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger*, (London/ New York: Burns and Oates, 2005), 138.

<sup>826</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 183; see also note, 28 Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes*, xiv: “nur im und durch den Leib Christi.” In the new introduction.

<sup>827</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 183.

<sup>828</sup> See Eamon Duffy, *Benedict XVI and the Eucharist*, The New Blackfriars, 3; 2007, vol. 88, number 1014, 198 referring to Romano Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (London 1935), 141.

<sup>829</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 183; Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes*, 210.

liturgical activity.

The Eucharistic sacrifice, real presence and communion is a person becoming and staying present amongst his People and giving his very self as food. So what is the relationship according to Ratzinger? My interpretation of his theology is that there is always a union of sacrifice, real presence and communion because Christ cannot be separated from himself. The union and unity of the Eucharist is also inseparable. As Ratzinger points out Christ is a person taking flesh at the incarnation and in his resurrection he connects liturgy, cosmos and history. It was he who sacrificed himself and thus the sacrifice will always be present at the eucharistic act. The real presence in the species at adoration still holds this fact as inherent, because it is Christ himself once sacrificing himself on the cross who is present in sacramental form as a person of the Trinity. Christians, having the Holy Spirit by baptism, are capable of receiving the sacramental Christ. What is evident now is that the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion is the relationship between Christ, the Father, the Holy Spirit and human beings, made possible by the sacramental sacrifice.

There is a difference between what something is and the many ways in which it can be described. The aspect of Ratzinger's contribution to eucharistic theology that I find most interesting is that of *todah*. In Christ, the Eucharist is the meal eaten in *todah* sacrifice, in a thanksgiving that is the inauguration of a new existence. The *todah* spirituality of the Old Covenant is connected to that of the New Covenant. "Here too, finally we can see the meaning of the Real Presence and the entire theology of the Easter worship of Christianity, against the biblical background of salvation history."<sup>830</sup> In this approach to sacrifice, Ratzinger finds new possibilities for ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Protestants. In *todah*, Ratzinger also finds a synthesis between "...the inner unity of both Testaments and a unity of which modern theology had increasingly lost sight." To Ratzinger it also reveals the unity of the Bible

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<sup>830</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, 58.

and the faith of the Church and of theology and pastoral practice. Ratzinger contends that the structural unity of the *todah* psalms and the Eucharist have a close connection, as well as is the case with *todah* spirituality and Christology.

Ratzinger's *communio*-ecclesiology and his teaching on the People of God emphasises presence and communion as well as the anchoring of this in the sacrifice of Christ. For Ratzinger, sacrifice and meal belong inseparably together.<sup>831</sup> I will provide an evaluation of the contribution of Ratzinger in Chapter Six, in the light of Vatican II.

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<sup>831</sup> See *ibid.*, 50.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF SCHILLEBEECKX'S EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I shall discuss the eucharistic theology of Schillebeeckx and consider his contributions mainly from the perspective of two periods. However, I shall also attend to his published article in Dutch 2000 on his new sacramental project “*Naar een herontdekking van de christelijke sacramenten: ritualisering van religieuze momenten in het alledaagse leven*” translated into English as “Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments: ritualizing Religious elements in Daily Life.”<sup>832</sup> The first period is prior to Vatican II and the second period subsequent to the Council.

The theology of the sacraments was Schillebeeckx's central concern in the 1950s and 1960s and was already present in his doctoral thesis published in 1952, in which he treats the sacraments in the liturgical life of the Church. In this chapter I shall discuss the main results on eucharistic theology found in *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*<sup>833</sup> and *The Eucharist*<sup>834</sup>.

Schillebeeckx's theology from Vatican II onwards is characterized by a considerable change of his theology by abandoning the Thomism that represented the conceptual frame of his earlier work. His use of hermeneutics, with attention to the experience of modern men and

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<sup>832</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, “Naar een herontdekking van de christelijke sacramenten: ritualisering van religieuze momenten in het alledaagse leven.” In *Tijdschrift voor theologie* 40 (2000), 164-187. GT from Dutch by Thomas Quartier, in Adrian Holderegger and Dietmar Mieth, “Hin zu einer Wiederentdeckung der christlichen Sakramente: Ritualisierung religiöser Momente im alltäglichen Leben“ in *Interdisziplinäre Ethik: Grundlagen, Methoden, Bereiche: Festgabe für Dietmar Mieth zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*; (Freiburg, Schweiz: Univ.-Verl., 2001), 309-339..See also Edward Schillebeeckx, “Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments: Ritualizing Religious Elements in Daily Life,” in *Ordo: Bath, Word, Prayer, Table. A Liturgical Primer in honor of Gordon W. Lathrop. Opening Essay by Edward Schillebeeckx*, eds Dirk G. Lange and Dwight W. Vogel, Akron, Ohio: OSL Productions, 2005, 6-34.

<sup>833</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ The Sacrament on the Encounter with God*, trans. is not given (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963).

<sup>834</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist* trans. N.D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward Stagbooks, 1968). Originally published as *Christus Tegenwoordigheid in de Eucharistie*, Uitgeverij H. Nelissen, Bilthoven 1967.

women and the contemporary world are his main concerns during the second period. He is original and creative, but when he introduced his hermeneutic to Roman Catholic systematic theology there were problems. One is the effect of his changing of focus. He wants to address the contemporary situation and this change with time. During this period he has written *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, *Christ: The Sacrament*, *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord: The Christian Experience in the Modern World*, and *Church: The Human Story of God*. Some theologians and the CDF have criticized him for emphasising the humanity of Christ too much at the cost of his divinity. I shall consider the arguments he uses in these books and return to these aspects in my discussion of his books. His defence of his method is above all found in *The Interim Report on the Books "Jesus" and "Christ,"*<sup>835</sup> and his response to the CDF is presented in *The Schillebeeckx Case*.<sup>836</sup>

Because Christology and ecclesiology are important for the formulation of eucharistic theology I shall address Schillebeeckx's contributions to a new formulation of Christian faith in his approach to Christology, revelation, and ecclesiology using concepts such as encounter, gift, experience, revelation, negativity, and contrast.

### **Biography**

Edward Schillebeeckx (1914–2009) was a Flemish Dominican theologian born in Antwerp.<sup>837</sup> He entered the Dominican order in 1934 after studies at the Jesuit University in Turnhout, Belgium, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1941.

In 1943, he concluded his studies at Turnhout, moved to Ghent for further education at the Dominican houses of study where he was greatly influenced by his teacher Dominic De

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<sup>835</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Interim Report on the books Jesus and Christ*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Seabury Press, 1980).

<sup>836</sup> Ted Schoof, O.P., ed. *The Schillebeeckx Case: Official exchange of letter and documents in the investigation of Fr. Edward Schillebeeckx by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1976-1980*. Originally published under the Auspices of the *Tijdschrift voor theologie*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1980).

<sup>837</sup> For a thorough biography see Philip Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1993).

Petter's courses in phenomenology, treating the analyses of human experience and the structures of consciousness.<sup>838</sup> Schillebeeckx wrote a thesis with De Petter as supervisor, with the aim of looking for the non-conceptual element in reason.<sup>839</sup> De Petter taught that intuition forms an essential part of the intellect and developed a notion of "implicit intuition."<sup>840</sup> This interested Schillebeeckx for some time, but soon he moved on to study theology as a system of concepts with a relative value. This insight was a significant change for Schillebeeckx, who maintained that he never has deviated from this view.<sup>841</sup> He clarifies that concrete experience is vital and that "the concept" is not everything.<sup>842</sup>

After a period at the armed forces he moved to Leuven. From 1945 to 1946, he studied at the Dominican Study centre *Le Saulchoir d'Étiolles*, near Paris, where he met representatives of the Nouvelle Théologie movement.<sup>843</sup> During the years in Paris, he also studied at the Sorbonne and completed his doctoral exam in 1946 at the *École des hautes études*. His thesis on *De sacramentele heilseconomie* (the sacramental economy of salvation) was published in 1952. He taught dogmatic theology at the Dominican Study House in Leuven from 1947 until 1957. During this time, he covered different subjects ranging from the theology of creation to eschatology. Creation was to remain an important foundation to faith for Schillebeeckx. Then, in 1958, he became professor in dogmatic theology and history of theology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands, and taught there until his retirement in 1983. This university was open to the new theology and suited Schillebeeckx well. His inaugural lecture with the title *Op zoek naar de levende God* published 1959 (In searching of the Living God)

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<sup>838</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, ed. Robert J. Schreiter (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 1-2. Schillebeeckx was influenced by De Petter since he met him in his philosophical studies in 1934 in Ghent and during his studies in Leuven from when De Petter was appointed to the theologicum in 1939 and even until the early 60s. Cf. John Bowden, *Edward Schillebeeckx: Portrait of a Theologian* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 26.

<sup>839</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, *God is New Each Moment: In conversation with Huub Oosterhuis and Piet Hoogeveen*, trans. David Smith (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), 14.

<sup>840</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>841</sup> See *ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>842</sup> See *ibid.*, 15.

<sup>843</sup> See Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 22-23 on the relationship between Chenu and Schillebeeckx.

was influenced by the *Nouvelle Théologie* founded by Chenu, Congar, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and others.<sup>844</sup>

During the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) Schillebeeckx was a co-worker of the cardinal Bernard Alfrink, archbishop of Utrecht. Already at the start of the Council, Schillebeeckx expressed a negative reaction to the schemata prepared by *the Preparatory Theological Commission*.<sup>845</sup> He succeeded in contributing to the development of the conciliar constitutions *Dei Verbum* (1964) and *Lumen Gentium* (1965). Schillebeeckx later suspected that the SCDF already had a file on him from 1966 because the documents that he later was asked to respond to bore the index number 46/66.<sup>846</sup>

In 1965, after the Council, Schillebeeckx was one of the authors involved in founding the theological journal *Concilium*, together with Chenu, Hans Küng, Karl Rahner and Yves Congar. At this time Schillebeeckx was inspired by Congar who had contributed to the Council in pointing to the “historically dynamic vision of the Church open to change.”<sup>847</sup> *Concilium* developed gradually a more progressive “reformist” thought, so much that Ratzinger who had contributed at the start left the collaboration. One of the main concerns of Schillebeeckx was his emphasis on the collegial nature of the episcopacy almost in contrast to the hierarchical one.

Schillebeeckx continued to be influential in the Netherlands after Vatican II and he was at the centre of the progressive movement in implementing its liturgical results. He has been considered by many theologians to be the leading Dutch-speaking contemporary theologian. One contributing factor is perhaps his engagement in the National Pastoral Council’s proposal to disconnect sacramental priesthood and obligation to celibacy. When the New Dutch

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<sup>844</sup> See Richard McBrien, “Schillebeeckx: No salvation outside the world” in *National Catholic Reporter*, 1 February 2010. It was from Chenu that he came to understand the development of tradition within the context of history <[http://ncronline.org/blogs/essays-theology/schillebeeckx-no-salvation-outside-world#.T0uU\\_D08kVI](http://ncronline.org/blogs/essays-theology/schillebeeckx-no-salvation-outside-world#.T0uU_D08kVI)> [accessed 22 January 2013].

<sup>845</sup> See Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 13.

<sup>846</sup> See Schoof, ed., *The Schillebeeckx Case*, 15.

<sup>847</sup> See Maureen Sullivan, O.P., *The Road to Vatican II: Key Changes in Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), 19.

Catechism, which was written already before the Council, was being revised Schillebeeckx was consulted.<sup>848</sup> It is interesting for my later discussion to note that he reacted against the notion mentioned about 20 times “that Jesus is a human person”. He objected to this because it gave the impression that Jesus was not God.”<sup>849</sup> The advice from Schillebeeckx to change this was followed. The Dutch Catechism consists of five parts: The Mystery of Existence, The Way to Christ, The Son of Man, The Way of Christ, and The Way to the End. Schillebeeckx found the catechism to be too individualistic, and with a lack of political and social dimension.<sup>850</sup>

The major works of Schillebeeckx were written after the Council. His theology was initially a Christology from above with a metaphysical approach close to that of Thomas Aquinas as seen in his writings before 1966, but his approach changed to a theology from below after a visit to the United States in 1966 when he met a culture with secularisation that he had not seen in Northern Europe.<sup>851</sup> This experience made him decide to write in a way that could be understood by common people and that was not directed towards theologians. In order to do this he adapted his theology and used a modification of critical theology from the Frankfurt School. On the basis of this Schillebeeckx developed a new and an increasingly progressive theology over the years. Schillebeeckx describes that his new theological method was “based on human and Christian experience, communal and personal.”<sup>852</sup> He applies this “to tradition, which is an experience that becomes extended. Individuality is included in this communal experience.”<sup>853</sup> The new method that he developed is obvious in *God the Future of Man* (first published 1969),<sup>854</sup> *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* (first published 1974), *Christ: The Christian Experience of Jesus as Lord* (first published 1977), *Interim Report on the*

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<sup>848</sup> The Hierarchy of the Netherlands and the higher Catechetical Institute at Nijmegen, trans. Kevin Smyth, *A New Catechism: Catholic Faith for Adults* (New York, London: Burns & Oates, 1967).

<sup>849</sup> Schillebeeckx, *I am a Happy Theologian*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1993), 29.

<sup>850</sup> See *ibid.*, 20.

<sup>851</sup> See *ibid.*, x.

<sup>852</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>853</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>854</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, trans. N.E. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969).



*Books of “Jesus” and “Christ”* (first published 1978), and *Church: The Human Story of God* (first published 1989). These books have broken new ground for twentieth century theology whether this is regarded as positive achievements or not.

Schillebeeckx holds that his aim with *Jesus* was finding a strict historical method to recover the historical aspect of Jesus and thus a scientific reconstruction of pre New Testament Christian traditions.<sup>855</sup> However, with his book *Christ*, he aimed at developing a New Testament Christology that was an exegesis of texts of the New Testament Canon.<sup>856</sup> The *Interim Report* was an attempt at clarifying his books *Jesus* and *Christ* on “the presuppositions, the hermeneutical principles and the methods of interpretation” and to address individual points where his text was criticised.<sup>857</sup> Schillebeeckx insisted on an indissoluble connection between the historical appearance of Christ and of his Church and that this is a key to understanding his theology.<sup>858</sup>

It is the innovative character of Schillebeeckx’s Christology in *Jesus* and *Christ* that has been questioned by the CDF, both by Cardinal Franjo Seper and then by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger whom Schillebeeckx already met at Vatican II. Schillebeeckx’s provocative views in *The Ministry of the Church*<sup>859</sup> and in *The Church with a Human Face*<sup>860</sup> were also examined. The issues investigated were among others his understanding of the resurrection of Christ, of the ministry of the Church and of the sacramental nature of office in the Roman Catholic Church. The result of the investigation was that Schillebeeckx was not condemned.

Schillebeeckx felt that his way of doing theology often was misunderstood. This was true, he holds, of the theology he used in his book *Church: The Human Story of God* (translated

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<sup>855</sup> Schoof, *The Schillebeeckx Case*, 46, 48-49.

<sup>856</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>857</sup> Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report*, preface.

<sup>858</sup> See Marguerite Thabit Abdul-Masih, *Edward Schillebeeckx and Hans Frei: A Conversation on Method and Christology* (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001), 4.

<sup>859</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM, 1981).

<sup>860</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry*, tr. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1985).

from Dutch the title was “Human beings as the Story of God.”<sup>861</sup> In the Foreword the first words are: “A small boy is said once to have remarked, ‘People are the words with which God tells his story.’ His remark is the theme of this book.”<sup>862</sup> Schillebeeckx complains: “edifying theology and loyal theological criticism within the church, including theological criticism, remain barren.”<sup>863</sup> “Those engaged in this activity must then stand by powerless and watch the exclusion of their legitimate but modest influence on church events and on the possibility of a new church movement in keeping with the gospel, of which we and many others boldly dreamed in the 1960s.”<sup>864</sup> He criticises that those elements that were “new” in Vatican II have “not been given any consistent institutional structures by the official Church.”<sup>865</sup> On the contrary: “by virtue of various concerns (which were often matters of church politics), church hierarchies achieved an uncontrolled power over man and women of God, ‘God’s people on the way’, who had been put under tutelage.”<sup>866</sup> Already during the Council did Schillebeeckx, in some circles, gain a high reputation for being innovative, open and having a high theological standard. Among the many theologians who support the view of Schillebeeckx is Mary Catherine Hilkert. According to her *Church* contributed to some important clarifications such as:

...an explicit distinction between salvation and revelation, further clarification on the relationship between religious experience and ethics, a new approach to the question of the uniqueness and universality of Jesus, a more developed call for democratic exercise of authority in the church, and a growing emphasis on creation and ecology.<sup>867</sup>

Schillebeeckx theology has also been considered having a continuing significance.<sup>868</sup>

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<sup>861</sup> Hilkert and Schreiter, eds, *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, “Introduction” by Hilkert, xxi. Cf. Schillebeeckx, *Church*, xiii.

<sup>862</sup> Schillebeeckx, *Church*, xiii.

<sup>863</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>864</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii-iv.

<sup>865</sup> *Ibid* xiv.

<sup>866</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>867</sup> Mary Catherine Hilkert, “Introduction,” in Hilkert and Schreiter, eds, *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, xxi.

<sup>868</sup> Hilkert and Schreiter, eds, *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, 185-194; Boeve, Depoortere and Erp, eds, *Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Theology*. (New York: T&T Clark International, 2010).

*Jesus, Christ and Church*

The publications of the books caused doubt as to Schillebeeckx's orthodoxy, especially expressed in his book on *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*.<sup>869</sup> Schillebeeckx holds that in this book he shares the journey with the reader. He explains: "It is written in such a way as one might suppose would put the contents within reach of anybody interested."<sup>870</sup> However: "To pick and choose among the chapters or change the order in which they are read will only rob the book of its inner dynamic."<sup>871</sup> Schillebeeckx explains in a first chapter in *Jesus* that his book is written with a pastoral intention.<sup>872</sup>

The CDF has questioned the *Jesus* book at least three times.<sup>873</sup> It is a "Jesus book" not altogether neglecting to consider Jesus as the Christ compared with the "Christ book" with its due reference to Jesus of Nazareth considered historically.<sup>874</sup> Belief in salvation from God in Jesus "can only be understood as a specific way of making belief in creation more precise."<sup>875</sup> God is the creator and Jesus is "the concentration of divine creation".<sup>876</sup> Philip Kennedy describes Schillebeeckx's Christology as "interpreting discursively the identity and significance of Jesus Christ."<sup>877</sup> He adds that Schillebeeckx's way of describing Christology as concentrated creation is to interpret Jesus's uniqueness through combining the second article in the Creed "I believe in Jesus Christ" with the first, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth."<sup>878</sup> Through his move to human history and especially to the story of Jesus he makes the belief in creation more easily understood. If Christian faith "regards creation as the beginning of salvation, to speak of Christology as concentrated creation is to emphasize that

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<sup>869</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, Foreword.."

<sup>870</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>871</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>872</sup> Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 17-40.

<sup>873</sup> See Schoof, ed., *The Schillebeeckx Case*, 142 referring to 17 April 1977, 6 July 1978, and 13-15 December 1979.

<sup>874</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, foreword.

<sup>875</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report*, 127.

<sup>876</sup> Philip Kennedy, "God and Creation," in Hilkert and Schreiter, eds, *The Praxis of the Reign of God*. 42.

<sup>877</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>878</sup> *Ibid.*

redemption offered by God the Creator is manifested, or condensed, in the man Jesus.”<sup>879</sup>

There has been much discussion of whether Jesus for Schillebeeckx is the eschatological prophet and precursor to the Messiah or Messiah himself. In Jesus he speaks of “Jesus of Nazareth” which deals with the Jesus of history and not the “historical Jesus.”<sup>880</sup> With this he says that he is not writing about the figure “reconstructed by historical science. As an answer to the CDF he writes on 13 April 1977: “In my second volume I have just given more extensive historical documentation and explained that the eschatological prophet is kingly, priestly, and messianic – in short, the Mosaic Messiah.”<sup>881</sup> Schillebeeckx confirms that the pages in *Jesus* on God as the “Abba” of Jesus are the very heart of his entire book.<sup>882</sup> It is not the word Abba as such that explains the unique relationship; rather, it is “a legitimate explication of Jesus’ self-awareness and this is precisely what the book aims to show!”<sup>883</sup> Schillebeeckx holds that the message about Jesus of the reign of God involved the exhortation to the disciples follow him. The Abba experience is the source of his message and praxis. The message is to follow after him and “do good.”<sup>884</sup> This consists in “the praxis of the reign of God” with this he refers to actions on behalf of humankind.<sup>885</sup>

In Schillebeeckx’s view the disciples entered a conversion experience after the resurrection of Christ and then found the courage and power to bear witness about the reign of God.<sup>886</sup> Even if Schillebeeckx seems to maintain a sceptical attitude towards “the empty tomb”, he sees the appearances of Christ after his resurrection as resulting in the disciples acknowledging Jesus as Christ and that the conversion of the faith was a real *Christophany*.<sup>887</sup> It was a result of new occurrences of sheer grace. He interprets the appearances as not

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<sup>879</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>880</sup> Schoof, ed., *The Schillebeeckx Case*, 54; See Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 67-70.

<sup>881</sup> Schoof, ed., *The Schillebeeckx Case* 60.

<sup>882</sup> See *ibid.*, 61-62.

<sup>883</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>884</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, 124.

<sup>885</sup> Hilkert and Schreier, *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, 122-125.

<sup>886</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, 126-127.

<sup>887</sup> See Schoof, ed. *The Schillebeeckx Case*, 64.

necessary “empirical establishment of a physically visible Jesus.”<sup>888</sup> Kennedy explains Schillebeeckx’s position that “ ‘seeing’ through faith need not necessary involve seeing!”<sup>889</sup> Kennedy holds that, contrary to those who “misunderstand” Schillebeeckx’ theology and claim that Schillebeeckx denies Jesus’ bodily and personal resurrection, there is an “unacknowledged subtlety in Schillebeeckx’s entire discussion of Christian faith in the resurrection.”<sup>890</sup> According to Kennedy Schillebeeckx applies Edmund Husserl’s principle of intentionality of consciousness to interpret resurrection faith.<sup>891</sup> Schillebeeckx explains how his point of view to irritated those who misunderstand him:

It is the aim of my book [*Jesus*] to stress both the objective and the subjective aspects of resurrection faith over against all objectivistic and subjectivistic one-sidedness in such a way that the ‘object’ – Jesus’ personal and corporeal resurrection and exaltation with God- and the ‘subject’ – the experience of faith which is expressed in scripture in the story of the appearances – cannot be separated.<sup>892</sup>

He further explains that the first version of the *Jesus* book “certainly did not say that what the New Testament means by ‘seeing Jesus’ is identical with the acquiring of a new self-understanding.”<sup>893</sup> He then states: “My intention here was to relieve this visual element of the deep significance which some people attach to it, namely of being the foundation of the whole of the Christian faith.”<sup>894</sup> Schillebeeckx holds that conversion was the meaning of the appearances.<sup>895</sup> He admits that his words in *Jesus* on the Easter experience may be ambiguous but what he wants to bring out is a close connection between what is said in the biblical text on the resurrection as “an event involving Christ” and “his glorified heavenly presence in his

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<sup>888</sup> Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 115.

<sup>889</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>890</sup> *Ibid.*, 116

<sup>891</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>892</sup> Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report*, 79. Schillebeeckx refers here to P. Schoonenberg saying that he also has pointed out this essential connection in *Wege nach Emmaüs. Unser Glaube an die Auferstehung Jesu* (Gras, 1974). Cf. Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 644-650 especially 646.

<sup>893</sup> Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report*, 81.

<sup>894</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>895</sup> See Schoof, ed. *The Schillebeeckx Case*, 64.

Church.”<sup>896</sup> It is precisely the experience of the reassembling of the disciples that is the key to understand his teaching:

The Easter experience lies in the experience of an event: namely the reassembling of the disciples, not merely in the name of Jesus (although we fail to give sufficient value, in a Jewish context, to that), but in the power of the risen Christ himself: Where two or three are gathered together in his name, Jesus is in the midst of them”; this New Testament text is in my view perhaps the purest, most adequate reflection of the Easter experience.<sup>897</sup>

Schillebeeckx holds that some fundamental aspects of Jesus’ resurrection always have to be faith-experiences.<sup>898</sup> They are never ”outside” or “apart” from such “faith-imbued” experience.

He mentions three points as follows:

- (a) God’s legitimation, ratifying and sanctifying of Jesus’s person, message and life of service ‘unto death’;
- (b) it is also exaltation and new creation, that is to say, God’s corrective triumph over negativity of death and man’s history of suffering, in which Jesus participated; in other words, there is life after death;
- (c) the resurrection is at the same time the sending of the Spirit and, in being that, of the personal, living Jesus Christ with his people on earth.”<sup>899</sup>

He concludes that “the conviction that Jesus has risen is an assurance that comes from God alone.”<sup>900</sup>

The CDF on the other hand emphasises that the conviction of the resurrection comes from the appearances. They find a divergence from the testimony in the Gospels, which gives importance to the objective foundation of faith in the resurrection and the teaching by Schillebeeckx.<sup>901</sup> The CDF comments that Schillebeeckx’s interpretation has “probably no chance of being accepted save by a very small number of exegetes.”<sup>902</sup> After having repeatedly

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<sup>896</sup> See Schillebeeckx *Jesus* 645- 647.

<sup>897</sup> *Ibid.*, 646. Cf. Mt 18:20.

<sup>898</sup> Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 649.

<sup>899</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>900</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>901</sup> See Schoof, ed. *The Schillebeeckx Case*, 133.

<sup>902</sup> See *ibid.*, 34. Cf. Schoof, ed., *The Schillebeeckx Case*, 133 on the analysis by the CDF that Schillebeeckx’s “conviction about the resurrection comes from a faith experience, and experience of conversion to the pneumatic presence of Christ, and it is this experience that occasions a certain visualization in the form of appearance.” Instead the Congregation states that “the testimony of the Gospel regarding the resurrection moves rather in the opposite direction, for it shows us how conviction regarding the resurrection arose out of the appearances; it was the appearances of the risen Christ that led to the disciples’ faith in the resurrection, a faith which was often not readily elicited.” The Congregation finds this divergence a rather serious matter. Cf. Hilkert and Schreiter, *The*

studied Schillebeeckx's view on the matter, I have come to think that Schillebeeckx' really has a point in his insistence in saying that the empty tomb in itself does not prove the resurrection of Christ. In saying this he underscores the importance of faith and that exegesis may be interpreted in many ways.<sup>903</sup> Schillebeeckx's defence seems strong when he refers to the importance of the faith of the Church, which comes from God's grace, and comments that "as to the way that assurance took a historical form...discussion on exegetical grounds could be endless."<sup>904</sup> Schillebeeckx then asserts that: "But anyone who accepts the origin of this apostolic conviction as rooted in divine grace...stands on Christian ground. He cannot be dismissed as heretical; and then he can only be judged and, if necessary, criticized for his way of presenting the matter on a basis of historico-critical and anthropological arguments – but then as a brother in the same Christian faith."<sup>905</sup>

From a vantage point of philosophy of language Schillebeeckx's most prominent interpretive framework came to be an approach to critical theory in the 1970s-1980s. Two philosophers from the Frankfurt School of social criticism, Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) and Jürgen Habermas (1929-), came to influence his later work.<sup>906</sup> Schillebeeckx explained that human suffering was a spring from which he developed a critique of both the authority of the Church and of tradition. Soon he came to form a social framework of salvation. He aimed at connecting human liberating activity with the salvation process of God in Jesus Christ. Schillebeeckx made it clear that he expected the Church to care for both souls and the bodies of human beings and for him "praxis" and "orthopraxis" were based on critical theory.<sup>907</sup>

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*Praxis of the Reign of God*, 89-9; *Christ*, 729. Schillebeeckx states that redemption by Christ was despite the death of Christ, not thanks to it.

<sup>903</sup> Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 649.

<sup>904</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>905</sup> *Ibid.*, 649-50.

<sup>906</sup> Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 49; Hilkert and Schreiter, *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, 26, 20-31, 189. Schillebeeckx, ed. Schreiter, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, 23.

<sup>907</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, Schreiter, ed., 24. See also Schillebeeckx's own definition of orthopraxis in *Jesus*, 747. "Literally 'right action'. The constant meaning of orthopraxis in this book is action or conduct consonant with the standard or 'directives' of the kingdom of God (criteria and directives examined in this book)."

Schillebeeckx even asserts that if people are to grasp what Christians mean by salvation they must have experience of human liberation.<sup>908</sup> Furthermore, he holds that humankind is not redeemed thanks to the death of Jesus but despite it.<sup>909</sup> In Jesus' death there is for Schillebeeckx only negativity.<sup>910</sup> He prefers to look at the crucifixion as the death of a prophet-martyr and of the righteous sufferer. He does not understand Jesus' death in categories of atonement and redemption.<sup>911</sup> Praxis is vital to Schillebeeckx who sees solidarity with the suffering *humanum* as a decisive factor.<sup>912</sup>

Schillebeeckx admits that he had a hard time during the years when he was under suspicion by the CDF<sup>913</sup> but he also felt that his theology was appreciated. He received many honorary doctorates for example from the Catholic University of Leuven in 1974. He was awarded the Erasmus prize in theology 1982<sup>914</sup> and in 1989 and finally he was the first and only theologian that has received the Gouden Ganzenveer price for excellent Dutch writing scholars.<sup>915</sup>

Schillebeeckx has had a large output of books and articles.<sup>916</sup> Work is still going on after his death in 2009 to publish the complete works of Schillebeeckx consisting of 11 volumes.<sup>917</sup> Among these works is the *Theological Testament*. Scholars such as Robert Schreiter consider this book the best presentation of Schillebeeckx's overall thinking. At his retirement speech at Nijmegen's university he declared that he regarded his speech as his 'theological testament.'<sup>918</sup>

After this more general presentation of Schillebeeckx's theology I shall move to my

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<sup>908</sup> See Janet M. O'Meara "Salvation: Living Communion with God" in *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, 108. Cf. Schillebeeckx, *Church*, 10.

<sup>909</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 729.

<sup>910</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Church*, 127.

<sup>911</sup> See John P. Galvin, "The Story of Jesus As the Story of God" in *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, 88.

<sup>912</sup> Cf. Schillebeeckx, *Church* 12-13, 88; Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 745; Hilkert and Schreiter, eds, *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, 108.

<sup>913</sup> Schillebeeckx, *I am a Happy Theologian*, 39.

<sup>914</sup> Schillebeeckx, ed. Schreiter, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, 8.

<sup>915</sup> <<http://www.rnw.nl/nederlands/article/theoloog-schillebeeckx-95-overleden>>[Accessed 13 January 2012].

<sup>916</sup> Boeve, Depoortere and Van Erp, eds, *Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Theology*, 273-74.

<sup>917</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Collected Works* (London: T & T Clarks, planned to be published during 2013).

<sup>918</sup> Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 76.



specific question on the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion.

### ***Christ the Sacrament: The Encounter with God***

The starting point of Schillebeeckx's theology was the Dominican spirituality of contemplation and action.<sup>919</sup> His theological studies started with Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, which he states, meant nothing to him. Instead, he preferred philosophy.<sup>920</sup> Theology first became interesting for Schillebeeckx when he was advised by De Petter to study Karl Adam's theology that was based on contemporary biblical research.<sup>921</sup> Karl Adam's research also treated the identity of Christianity. This in turn inspired Schillebeeckx to move to a study on the Latin Fathers of the Church, especially Augustine.<sup>922</sup>

One of Schillebeeckx's best-known books is *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*.<sup>923</sup> In this, Schillebeeckx treats among other themes Christ, the Sacrament of God, the Church as the sacrament of the risen Christ, the ecclesial character of the sacramental action, and the ecclesial character of Christian life. He ends his book with a discourse on the mystical quality of the sacraments.<sup>924</sup> This book is of great interest to my study of the Eucharist as it both was strongly influenced by the principle of sacramentality in Thomas Aquinas and also by phenomenology and thus connects to the topic of his doctoral dissertation *De sacramentele heilseconomie* published in 1952.<sup>925</sup> In *Christ the Sacrament* there is a good example of the method used by Schillebeeckx to stress the personal and interactive meetings with Christ in the sacraments.<sup>926</sup> Encountering Christ is the encounter with God; Christ is the primordial

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<sup>919</sup> See Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 5.

<sup>920</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *God is New Each Moment*, 12-13.

<sup>921</sup> See *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>922</sup> See Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 20-21

<sup>923</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, trans. Mark Schoof, O.P., and Laurence Bright, O.P. (London: Sheed and Wards, 1963).

<sup>924</sup> See *ibid.*, v-viii.

<sup>925</sup> See John Bowden, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, 40.

<sup>926</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament.*, 133.

sacrament for human beings to meet God.<sup>927</sup> Christ is the Sacrament of God and the Church is seen as the Sacrament of the Risen Lord.<sup>928</sup> The sacraments are the means by which Christ chose to continue his redeeming work. This means that it is the Church which lives on earth as “the sacrament of the risen Christ” and exists in order to reach human beings at all times and all places.<sup>929</sup> The sacraments of the Church in their fullness are seen as the fruitful sacrament.<sup>930</sup> Encounter may be regarded as one of three building blocks in the theology of Schillebeeckx, the other being humanity and negativity.<sup>931</sup>

The use of the concept “encounter” puts Schillebeeckx’s eucharistic theology in a modern anthropological perspective. Schillebeeckx may have arrived at this through his Thomistic training which enabled him to be sensitive to revelation in the Church, but among all under the influence by De Petter’s philosophy which was both concerned with humanity and open to the divine.<sup>932</sup> As a result, Schillebeeckx does not use the traditional relationship between natural and supernatural as the basis of his explanations for the real presence of Christ in his Church and in the Sacraments. He uses “encounter” that builds on relationship between persons and is a fundamental mode of human existence.<sup>933</sup> The *bodily* presence of human beings to each other is vital for an encounter.<sup>934</sup> The body is important because God sent his Son, Christ incarnated, to give his life on the Cross as an act that included the body. Schillebeeckx sees the Church as a kind of “enlarged Body.” The Church is the Lord’s visible body, it is realized in a society which is a sign *Societas signum*.<sup>935</sup> He has through all his books tried to explain the fundamental sacramental understanding of the Incarnation. For Schillebeeckx it was true that

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<sup>927</sup> See *ibid.*, 13-17.

<sup>928</sup> See *ibid.*, 47-49.

<sup>929</sup> See *ibid.*, 222.

<sup>930</sup> See *ibid.*, 133-140.

<sup>931</sup> See Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 135.

<sup>932</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *God is New Each Moment*, 13. “At the same time, De Petter’s philosophy was strongly oriented towards theological questions. He was always asking how you could approach God from the vantage-point of human thought.”

<sup>933</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament*, foreword xv.

<sup>934</sup> See *ibid.*, xv-vi.

<sup>935</sup> See *ibid.*, 48.

God became man in Christ, was incarnated, and that this indicated that God is “pre-eminently a human God, a *Deus humanissimus*.”<sup>936</sup> According to Schillebeeckx, men and women are able to know and encounter God in the ordinary life in human history.<sup>937</sup> Schillebeeckx has an interpersonal and inter-subjective approach when he asserts that it is through encountering Jesus that men and women may encounter God. Sacraments are where Christ makes himself visible “by taking up earthly non-glorified realities into his glorified saving activity.”<sup>938</sup> Initially Schillebeeckx sees the meeting as a one-to-one encounter, the person meeting God receiving the sacrament.<sup>939</sup> This relationship develops to a two-fold meeting and then to a one-to-others-to-One contact. In Schillebeeckx’s later works there is an emphasis on the encounter of God through others, the encounter through the Church is not the only way.<sup>940</sup> Encounter with God is also made through meeting the outcasts and rejects of human society. Schillebeeckx concludes his book *Christ the Sacrament* with a reflection on the mystical quality of the sacraments.<sup>941</sup>

### ***The Eucharistic Presence***

The approach Schillebeeckx uses in *The Eucharist* is to return to the traditional discussion of the concept “Substance” in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>942</sup> Doing this he wanted to make a new approach towards the formulation of eucharistic faith. He discusses a rediscovery of the sacramental symbolic activity in the Eucharist. In treating the Eucharist Schillebeeckx uses the concept of sign when he debates the distinctively eucharistic manner of the eucharistic

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<sup>936</sup> See Schillebeeckx: *A Theologian in His History, Volume I: A Catholic Theology of Culture (1914-1965)*, trans. Erik Borgman, (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), 238. Cf. Discussion in Schoof, ed., *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, 25-28 on Jesus as a human person; See Schoof, ed., Schillebeeckx Caste, 149. There is a problem stated by Prefect Franjo Cardinal Seper in the attached notes to Schillebeeckx on the divinity of *Jesus*. He states: “The reader will find himself shuttling back and forth between two meanings: human person, not a human person.” Cf. *Jesus*, 667.

<sup>937</sup> See Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 136.

<sup>938</sup> Bowden, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, 44.

<sup>939</sup> See Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 136.

<sup>940</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>941</sup> Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament*, 217-222.

<sup>942</sup> Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 53.

presence.<sup>943</sup> He highlights transubstantiation and transsignification in relation to a “new giving of meaning.”<sup>944</sup> A characteristic feature in the theology of Schillebeeckx is his emphasis on the person of Christ. This is evident in his argumentation on the interpretation of “the body and blood of the Lord” appearing in sacramental form.<sup>945</sup>

Schillebeeckx explains his view of Christ’s death on the cross and its relationship to the eucharistic sacrament. First he asserts that what is historically past cannot be once more actually present, not by anyone including God and not even “in mystery.”<sup>946</sup> He explains that: “God’s omnipotence in the man Jesus becomes the presence of a man to his fellow men. Because this human mode of being present is conditioned by bodily qualification, it remains limited and cannot be equated with omnipresence.”<sup>947</sup> From this statement Schillebeeckx tries to find eternity in the death of Christ by discussing how there is a “certain presence” in mystery in the sacraments. He holds that

But if in the sacraments there is nevertheless a certain presence in mystery, this is possible only if, in Christ’s historical redemptive acts, there already was an element of something perennial; an enduring trans-historical element which now becomes sacramentalized in an earthly event of our own time in a visible act of the Church. And indeed, in keeping with sound Christology, we must hold that this trans-historical element is unquestionably present in the acts of Christ’s life. This brings us to the second aspect of the redemptive acts of Jesus.<sup>948</sup>

The trans-historical aspect is explained by understanding the sacrifice of the Cross and all the mysteries of Christ as personal acts of God. This makes the acts eternally actual and enduring.<sup>949</sup> Schillebeeckx explains further that in the man Jesus, God the Son is personally present in the human acts of Christ that transcend time.<sup>950</sup> “His human existence itself is wholly

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<sup>943</sup> See *ibid.*, 139.

<sup>944</sup> See *ibid.*, 144-145

<sup>945</sup> See *ibid.*, 148-150.

<sup>946</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament*, 55.

<sup>947</sup> See *ibid.*, 56.

<sup>948</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>949</sup> *Ibid.*, 57

<sup>950</sup> See *ibid.*

and entirely a presence of God among us.”<sup>951</sup>

### *Discussions on the Tridentine Approach to Faith*

Schillebeeckx starts his query with an exposition and explanation of a completely new theological interpretation of the Eucharistic Presence in the thirteenth century, which he defines as a new non-sensualistic “modernist view.”<sup>952</sup> This new interpretation is in unambiguous contrast to the “sensualistic” interpretation of the unique presence of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>953</sup> Aquinas, says Schillebeeckx, taught that the species, i.e. the form or kind of the elements bread and wine, realized “the physical presence” of Christ “in a spiritual – that is, invisible – manner”.<sup>954</sup> Both Bonaventure and Aquinas further discuss the invisible physical presence in their opposition to the formulation of the Roman Synod in 1059.<sup>955</sup> Aquinas explains that, “Christ is not eaten and chewed with the teeth in his corporality”, and that the priests were drinking “a *Sacramentum* of Christ’s blood,” that is, not his physical blood.<sup>956</sup> Bonaventure did not use the term *sacramentum* but the words “the forms of the most holy signs.”<sup>957</sup> Schillebeeckx points out that Aquinas held that Christ “was not enclosed in the tabernacle, although the sacramental forms or consecrated hosts were present there”.<sup>958</sup>

After having developed these points of the sacramental presence, Schillebeeckx moves to discuss methodology. He has a phenomenological standpoint in which he stresses that the faith

<sup>951</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>952</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 11.

<sup>953</sup> See *ibid.*, 11. Schillebeeckx exemplifies the sensualistic expression with the citation “in communion, I bite the true body of Christ.” Schillebeeckx insists that this “sensualistic” understanding had been generally prevalent in the Middle Ages even if it also met some criticism. Schillebeeckx states that the new non-sensualistic modernist view was supported by, for example, Albert the Great, Bonaventure and Aquinas and that it “certainly contained an element of shock”.

<sup>954</sup> See *ibid.*, 13. See note 4 referring to *ST*, III, q. 75, a. 1, ad 4. See also definition of species in Livingstone, *Oxford Concise Dictionary*, 543. “Species” a Latin word meaning ‘form’ or ‘kind,’ employed in scholastic theology to designate the material elements used in the sacraments, especially the bread and wine in the Eucharist, and in that sense taken over into theological English.”

<sup>955</sup> At this synod the theologian Berengar of Tours, according to Bonaventure, had to submit to a very “excessively formulated” and “exaggeratedly sensualistic” profession of faith. See also *The Eucharist*, 14, note 7.

<sup>956</sup> This might also be put in another way, “that is, not drinking his blood in a crude way.”

<sup>957</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 15. See note 11 referring to *ST*, III, q. 77, a. 7. “sacramentum corporis Christi veri.”

<sup>958</sup> See *ibid.*, 13. See also note 3 referring to *ST*, III, q. 76, a. 7.

is a living faith and an existential event.<sup>959</sup> Event is the point of view from which Schillebeeckx treats the real Presence in the Eucharist. His intention is to open up this Catholic dogma so that modern man can understand it and feel at home with it.<sup>960</sup>

It is in the last part of his book *Eucharist* that Schillebeeckx gives his own understanding of the sacrament. The principle that Schillebeeckx uses to discuss reality and real presence is that reality is the work of God, not of human beings. God created everything in order to reveal his love for men and women. He is present everywhere in his creation and this creation is a gift from God to human beings. The presence of God is a mystery in which all persons are invited. This mystery is God's giving and personal real presence.<sup>961</sup>

Schillebeeckx interprets the entire eucharistic event as the gift of Christ's giving of himself to men and women and in this to the Father.<sup>962</sup> The Eucharist is Christ's body, the paschal sacrifice given to be eaten. "What the gospel says is, This bread - both the symbol of life (*de tuis donis ac datis* - the cosmic liturgy) and the paschal bread (the Old Testament liturgy with its historical significance) - is my body."<sup>963</sup> My body is a paschal sacrifice which I give you here to eat."<sup>964</sup> "The real presence is intended for believers, but through the medium of and *in* this gift of bread and wine. In other words, the Lord who gives himself thus is *sacramentally* present."<sup>965</sup> The bread and wine become in the sacramental commemorative meal a new meaning as signs of the specific sacramental form Christ's real presence.<sup>966</sup> However, we know God only in signs and this highlights God's disclosing, concealing and revealing of himself.<sup>967</sup>

What is very important for Schillebeeckx is that there is a bond between the real presence

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<sup>959</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 20.

<sup>960</sup> See *ibid.*, 21.

<sup>961</sup> See *ibid.*, 126-128.

<sup>962</sup> See *ibid.*, 136.

<sup>963</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>964</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>965</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>966</sup> See *ibid.*, 137.

<sup>967</sup> See *ibid.*, 128.

of Christ in the Church and the real presence in the Eucharist.<sup>968</sup> The Church is a sign of Christ as the one celebrating the eucharistic sacrament.<sup>969</sup> Now in the Eucharist Christ gives himself in living, personal presence in the form of the bread.

The phenomenological form of the eucharistic bread and wine is nothing other than the sign which makes real Christ's gift of himself with the Church's responding gift of herself involved in this making real to us, a sign inviting every believer to participate personally in this event.<sup>970</sup>

The Eucharistic meal is for Schillebeeckx a reciprocity of giving. The Eucharist is a sign that works reciprocally by bringing Christ's real presence to the faithful and the Church's, the celebrating community's, as a responding gift in and through Christ.<sup>971</sup> In saying this it is important, Schillebeeckx emphasises, to stress the fact that the giving is always a gift to the Father.<sup>972</sup> He argues further that the "signifying function of the sacrament (*Sacramentum est in genere signi*) is here at its highest value."<sup>973</sup>

In his explanation of the real presence of Christ, Schillebeeckx never mentions how he thinks that the Eucharist can be a sacrifice. The death and life of Christ, he holds, is celebrated and brought into a reciprocal personal meeting as a remembrance of Christ's death on the Cross and his resurrection. The Eucharist is, explains Schillebeeckx, the new paschal meal, "the new Passover, the definitive event of Redemption" but he does not use the concept of the Council of Trent calling the Eucharist a sacrifice.<sup>974</sup>

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<sup>968</sup> See *ibid.*, 138.

<sup>969</sup> See *ibid.*, 137.

<sup>970</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>971</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>972</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>973</sup> See *ibid.* Cf. *ST* III, III, q. 60 a.1-a. 3.

<sup>974</sup> For a discussion on how the Magisterium understands Schillebeeckx's approach to the question on sacrificial soteriology *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 30. "Should we be surprised, then, that in the fourth part of your book, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* in which you present your outline of a Christology, you say nothing to suggest a sacrificial soteriology, and this despite your central idea of 'salvation in Jesus Coming from God,'" 557.

*Transubstantiation, Transsignification and a New Giving of Meaning*

Schillebeeckx often repeats that the background of the Eucharistic event is important. The Eucharist cannot be seen apart from the rite of the Eucharist.<sup>975</sup> He gives as an example the fact that the consecrated hosts always are given reverence. This of course is not given to unconsecrated hosts.<sup>976</sup> Schillebeeckx asks what the reality is that is experienced in the perception of the Eucharistic form. He speaks of human perception and especially sensory perception. He points out that sensory perception cannot be called either objective or subjective and should not be interpreted either realistically or idealistically.<sup>977</sup> As the perception is not independent on the environment it is not distinct from the person that experiences it, neither is it a condition of the consciousness nor an objective quality of reality.<sup>978</sup> In his treatment on this aspect, Schillebeeckx is influenced by Merleau-Ponty who holds that the meaning of sensory perception is dependent on this perception and loses its meaning if separated from it.<sup>979</sup>

When Schillebeeckx speaks of human perception, he regards consciousness in its entirety as “situated *in* human perception, and not behind, above or beneath it.”<sup>980</sup> Following the discussion of Schillebeeckx, it makes sense that sensory contact with the bread and wine “cannot be regarded as an objective qualification of reality.”<sup>981</sup> Schillebeeckx moves closer to the discussion on transubstantiation when he connects the fact that men and women partly through sensory perception open up “to the mystery of reality that is given by God.” Human beings open up to “the metaphysical being which is prior to and is offered to man’s ontological sense—that is, to his *logos*, which “*makes being appear and thus establishes meaning.*”<sup>982</sup> Schillebeeckx does not stop there. He also moves to the interpretation that the conceptual

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<sup>975</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 144-145.

<sup>976</sup> See *ibid.*, 144.

<sup>977</sup> See *ibid.*, 145.

<sup>978</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>979</sup> See *ibid.*, 146.

<sup>980</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>981</sup> See *ibid.*, 147.

<sup>982</sup> *Ibid.*



approach of men and women also connects concrete associations with things and thus sees things in a way as they *appear*.<sup>983</sup> Thus, it is not possible for humans to know the difference between the reality and the appearance as a phenomenon.<sup>984</sup> Reality is a mystery, experience is the medium through which is used by God to reveal himself and to communicate with human beings.<sup>985</sup>

Schillebeeckx sees the general structure of human knowledge of reality as important in order to understand the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>986</sup> Hence, he returns to his discussion of how men and women give meaning to reality and to the *appearance* of the reality of salvation and combines these. The complex reality of human understanding of the meaning of faith in the Eucharist can be understood as eucharistic transsignification. Schillebeeckx thus holds that transsignification and transubstantiation are not identical but related.<sup>987</sup> Schillebeeckx often repeats the importance of understanding the distinction between reality itself and reality as a phenomenal appearance.<sup>988</sup>

With this in mind it is interesting how Schillebeeckx wants to understand what happens when the bread and wine changes into the body of Christ. To Schillebeeckx the explanation is that the creative Spirit makes the bread and wine become “the body of the Lord” as offered for spiritual nourishment. His conclusion is that “because what is signified via the phenomenal is changed objectively, the significance of the phenomenal itself is also changed.”<sup>989</sup> When Schillebeeckx studies transubstantiation and transsignification he finds an indissoluble connection between them and that each of them is impossible to distinguish.<sup>990</sup> He adds that for him personally he “cannot be satisfied with a *purely* phenomenological interpretation without

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<sup>983</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>984</sup> See *ibid.*, 148.

<sup>985</sup> See *ibid.* See also Abdul-Masih, *Hans Frei and Edward Schillebeeckx*, 60.

<sup>986</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>987</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>988</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>989</sup> Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 149.

<sup>990</sup> See *ibid.*, 150.

metaphysical density.”<sup>991</sup> A transsignification is not enough, it has to be “borne up and evoked by the re-creative activity of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ sent by the Father.”<sup>992</sup>

The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist can therefore only be approached by *allowing* the form of bread and wine experienced phenomenally to *refer to* his presence (of Christ and his Church) in a projective act of faith which is an *element of and in* faith in Christ’s eucharistic presence.”<sup>993</sup> “This act does not bring about the real presence, but presupposes it as a metaphysical priority.”<sup>994</sup>

Schillebeeckx understands that the whole event when Christ appears in the Eucharist and offers himself as food and the believer receives him as food is “the ‘sacramental form’ of his presence and the important event is that Christ as the ‘body of the Lord’ is proclaiming himself as food.”<sup>995</sup> As I said before, the meal event is the main base for Schillebeeckx’s understanding of the Eucharist. This meal activity in the eucharistic liturgy, in the believing, living and celebrating Church is a place for the action of the Spirit of Christ sent by the Father. The goal is saving and creating a new creation that reaches into the eschatological relationship of the Kingdom of God and is a meal of solidarity and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.<sup>996</sup>

### *The “How” and “Why” of the Transubstantiation*

In the last part of his book *The Eucharist* Schillebeeckx discusses the “why” and “how” of the transubstantiation. As a first point, he affirms that he cannot accept the statement that the “why” of the transubstantiation is more important than the “how”.<sup>997</sup> Schillebeeckx has instead tried to understand the “how” within the “why.”<sup>998</sup> He argues that Christ’s presence in the Eucharist is a reality and for the believer to be found in the phenomenal appearance. In the form of the bread and wine, the believer may taste Christ’s love because he has given himself

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<sup>991</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>992</sup> See *ibid.*, 151.

<sup>993</sup> *Ibid.* 150.

<sup>994</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>995</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>996</sup> See *ibid.*, 151. See *Gaudium et Spes*, (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), 38.

<sup>997</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 155. See the statement of K. Kvant and Schillebeeckx’s disagreement.

<sup>998</sup> See *ibid.*

as sacramental nourishment.<sup>999</sup>

Schillebeeckx has already, at the start of his book *The Eucharist* warned that it is “dangerous simply to repeat a formulation of faith that was made in a different climate of thought in the past and that if we do so it is hardly possible to speak of a *living* faith.”<sup>1000</sup> At the very end of his book and as a reaction to the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*, which holds that a theologian must be careful in looking for new expressions,<sup>1001</sup> Schillebeeckx discusses the possibility for a theologian to search for new ways of interpreting the dogma of transubstantiation. Schillebeeckx, who had to defend his teaching to the CDF three times articulates his belief that if a theologian goes directly *against* a dogma he must reconsider his faith, but it is a different thing to search for new interpretations of that dogma. He says:

Any new interpretation still demands the consent (or possibly rejection) by the faithful, and it has also to be accessed by those who judge all interpretations of faith – the world episcopate in unity with the pope, who themselves live from the gospel of Christ in communion with the entire Church.”<sup>1002</sup>

The whole book *The Eucharist* shows that Schillebeeckx has chosen to include all the faithful when he tries to explain faith in the real presence of Christ.

### *New Approach Toward a Formulation of Eucharistic Faith*

Schillebeeckx speaks of a rediscovery of the sacramental symbolic activity, the sacrament as sign and the manifold realization of the one “real Presence” of Christ. Having founded a basic understanding on these aspects he moves on to discuss the distinctively eucharistic manner of the “real Presence.” The real presence, Schillebeeckx holds, has after Vatican II been approached by theologians in a new way that changed the focus from “physical”<sup>1003</sup> and

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<sup>999</sup> See *ibid.*, 156.

<sup>1000</sup> See *ibid.*, 25.

<sup>1001</sup> See *ibid.*, 158.

<sup>1002</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1003</sup> The emphasis has changed, but the debate on physical theories is still going on. For a recent debate see Benedetto Testa, *I Sacramenti Della Chiesa, Sezione quinta, La Chiesa, Volume 9*, (Milano: Jaca Book, 1995),

ontological interpretations, to the relationship between the metaphysical approach and the sacramentality of the Eucharist.<sup>1004</sup> The sacraments seen by Schillebeeckx as symbolic acts, or activity as signs. The notion of sacrament as sign is already present in Aquinas (*sacramentum est in genere signi*.)<sup>1005</sup>

Schillebeeckx's approach to understanding the sacraments as sacramental realities and not as physical realities is important. He holds that both Protestants and Catholics value this approach. Schillebeeckx's starting point is an anthropological concept of sign, the sign seen as symbol that is derived in a natural way from the acts of persons and expresses and manifests experiences. The accent for Schillebeeckx is not on the reality or on being in itself for itself, but on interpersonal relationships. To arrive at this conclusion Schillebeeckx refers first to a transitional period which he calls "metaphysical" interpretation. In explaining this he distinguishes between the *noumenon* (reality itself) and the *phenomenon* (the form in which it appears).<sup>1006</sup> He sees in this the very essence of the older Thomistic view. Schillebeeckx cites, among other explanations, the opinion of A. Vanneste, who was influenced by de Baciocchi and Leenhardt's *Ceci est mon corps*, and has tried to make the transubstantiation more understandable by pointing to creation as a departure.<sup>1007</sup> In this approach, God and not human beings give things their ultimate meaning. Schillebeeckx emphasises the importance of noting the difference between what things are for God (and for the believer) and what they are for

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148. Testa refers to modern debates on the physical theories of Transubstantiation between F. Selvaggi and C. Colombo, 148. "Secondo il primo (F. Selvaggi) è necessario basarsi sulla sostanza fisica che non si raccontra di là delle proprietà che si manifestano all'uomo; essa è l'insieme delle proprietà caratteristiche con cui si distingue una realtà dall'altra. Per C.Colombo la sostanza secondo la tradizione cristiana è la realtà concreta e naturale del pane e del vino come la si può conoscere nella esperienza umana comune. Siccome il pane, per esempio, ci mostra come una 'cosa' distinta dalle altre e caratteristica, ci sarà qualcosa che la costituisce, che ne è la ragione oggettiva di essere. Dal dibattito risulta chiaro che nell'eucaristia non abbiamo il caso di una sostanza che corrisponde alla apparenze esterne così come sono presentate dalla fede e dalla teologia. Non cambia la realtà esterna, possiamo dire fisico-chimica che, essendo il segno, rimane e significa efficacemente prima la realtà del pane e poi quella del Corpo di Cristi." ; See also J. T. Clark, "Physics, Philosophy, Transubstantiation, Theology," *Theological Studies* 12 (1951), 25-51.

<sup>1004</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 96-97.

<sup>1005</sup> See *ST*, III, q. 60 a. 1 – a. 3.

<sup>1006</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 107.

<sup>1007</sup> See *ibid.*, 111.

secular experience. Schillebeeckx points to the personal sphere into which sacraments can be taken up as encounters with Christ.<sup>1008</sup> Schillebeeckx clarifies that sign always refers to something absent but that symbolic activity is a way of experiencing reality itself.<sup>1009</sup>

The presence of Christ is manifold and exists in the liturgical celebration of the Word and in the congregation of the faithful as well as in the sacraments.<sup>1010</sup> Schillebeeckx highlights that the aim of the Eucharist is a meal<sup>1011</sup> and that the communion in Christ is the means for a more intimate presence of Christ in each individual communicant and also in the community of believers as a whole.<sup>1012</sup> For Schillebeeckx the sacramental bread and wine are the sign that both makes Christ's presence real to the faithful and also the sign that makes the real presence of the Church present to Christ. The eucharistic meal is important as it signifies both Christ's gift of himself and the responding gift of the Church of herself to him. This happens in and through Christ.<sup>1013</sup>

Schillebeeckx then turns to the discussion of the theologians of the *nouvelle théologie* and especially Henri de Lubac who insisted that the early scholastic theologians of the High Middle Ages when speaking of the real presence put the focus on the mystical body i.e. the eucharistic Communion with Christ (*res sacramenti*)<sup>1014</sup> and not on Christ's Eucharistic presence (*res et*

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<sup>1008</sup> See *ibid.*, 101.

<sup>1009</sup> See *ibid.*, 100.

<sup>1010</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7. See also *Mysterium Fidei*, 35-39. See Also Augustine, *Sermon 341* on three modes of the presence of the Word of God: he is present with the Father from all eternity, he is present in Christ to whose human nature he was united at the Incarnation, but he is also present in his body, which is the church, at the same time his bride.

<sup>1011</sup> This is pointed out in ch. 6 of the Tridentine decree on the Sacrament of the Eucharist (Denzinger 1643): *quod fuerit a Christo Domino, ut sumatur, institutum.*

<sup>1012</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 104.

<sup>1013</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, 213.

<sup>1014</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 111. See note 26, Schillebeeckx refers to *ST*, III, q. 73. a. 2, a. 3 and a. 4; q. 82. a. 2. ad 3; q. 83.a. 4. for an explanation of the difference between *res et Sacramentum* and *res sacramenti*. Cf. Schillebeeckx's *Reader*, 212. Schillebeeckx holds that there is a difference between the scholastic theologians who acknowledged the real presence of Christ "in heaven" and "in bread and wine" and only regarded the real presence in the faithful as the fruits of these and his opinion that the Eucharist is a commemorative meal, a sacramental form of the event of Christ's historical death on the cross resulting in the withdrawal of the secular significance of the bread and wine and become bearers of Christ's gift of himself. Bread and wine takes on a new meaning. This depends on the living Lord in the Church through the faithful becoming the sign of the real presence of Christ who gives himself to men. This sign presupposes Christ's real presence in the Church, thus both in the community of the faithful and in the one who officiates in the Eucharist.

*Sacramentum*).<sup>1015</sup> The latter is a relational personal aspect that is always central for Schillebeeckx.

Schillebeeckx is pleased by the fact that an anthropological view is expressed in the encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950). He finds that this message began to be implemented in England and the Netherlands during the years 1954-66. During this time, Schillebeeckx notes, the categories of natural philosophy started to give way to anthropological thinking. Schillebeeckx gives J. de Baciocchi the honour of being the first theologian to lead the way to the understanding of the eucharistic presence as sacramental presence thus beyond the physical and purely ontological interpretations. Schillebeeckx agrees with de Baciocchi that the sacramental presence becomes possible by Christ's creational power in giving himself in the signs of bread and wine.<sup>1016</sup> Schillebeeckx points out that Charles Davis presented an anthropological interpretation that was in harmony with de Baciocchi based on anthropological thinking and interpersonal categories.<sup>1017</sup> Davis, says Schillebeeckx, explains that Christ is closer to the person in grace and more intimate than he is in the tabernacle.<sup>1018</sup> The real presence of Christ is therefore completed in the interaction between the person and Christ. It seems that Schillebeeckx is using the approach of Davis and de Baciocchi to develop his own anthropological Eucharistic theology, but it is the theology of Schoonenberg that he evaluates as, "generally acceptable to modern existential thought."<sup>1019</sup>

When it comes to the Eucharist and "bread and wine", Schillebeeckx places this in relation to human religious symbolic activity.<sup>1020</sup> As in his later works, Schillebeeckx puts much emphasis on activity. It is not "the bread and wine" but the eucharistic meal where the

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<sup>1015</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 110. See de Lubac, *Corpus mysticum* (Théologie, no.3), Paris (1944), 1949, especially 295-339.

<sup>1016</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 108-109.

<sup>1017</sup> See *ibid.*, 114-15. Cf. Charles Davis contribution in "Understanding the Real Presence," *The Word in History: The St. Xavier Symposium*, ed. T. Patrick Burke (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), 154-78.

<sup>1018</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 117.

<sup>1019</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>1020</sup> See *ibid.*, 134.

gifts are consumed that is the highpoint. He finds the food, meal and community human matter that becomes sacrament.<sup>1021</sup> Schillebeeckx holds that the paschal feast of Israel was an anamnesis of the exodus from Egypt. The primitive Church situated the Eucharist within the celebration of the Old Testament and so achieved an inward but transcendental fulfilment, the definitive Passover and event of redemption.<sup>1022</sup>

When Schillebeeckx speaks of the transubstantiation, he accentuates the meal celebrated in a religious symbolic activity, the recollection of the living sacrifice of Christ's death.<sup>1023</sup> What happens is according to Schillebeeckx, "that the faithful share in Christ's rising to life and accomplish this with him in faith while giving thanks to God."<sup>1024</sup> Schillebeeckx holds that there is no direct purpose for adoration in the Eucharist.<sup>1025</sup> What is at hand is the *ratio sacramenti*, which is the really sacramental element "our Eucharistic accomplishment with Christ of, and salvific inclusion in, the life-giving death of the Lord."<sup>1026</sup> With this Schillebeeckx gives a conclusion on how he understands the real presence of Christ and his Church in the Eucharist.

### *Recent Development in the Sacramental Theology of Schillebeeckx*

In 2000 Schillebeeckx gives an opening essay in honor of Gordon W. Lathrop with the title "*Naar een herontdekking van de christelijke sacramenten: ritualisering van religieuze momenten in het alledaagse leven*" (Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments: Ritualizing Religious Elements in Daily Life).<sup>1027</sup>

In his essay, he first makes a review of theological questions that he finds "inadequately

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<sup>1021</sup> See *ibid.*, 134-135.

<sup>1022</sup> See *ibid.*, 135-136.

<sup>1023</sup> See *ibid.*, 136.

<sup>1024</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1025</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1026</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1027</sup> See Schillebeeckx, "Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments" in Lange and Vogel, eds *Ordo: Bath, Word, Prayer, Table*.

answered, and pointless questions that need no answers,”<sup>1028</sup> then he presents “An Outline of a New View of Sacramental Liturgy, Theology and Pastoral Practice.”<sup>1029</sup> I find three answers in his review that are especially relevant to my study of sacrament. First, he proposes a broadening of the liturgical field both materially and spiritually.<sup>1030</sup> Such a broadening is helped by realizing that liturgy is an intertwined “dual element” and has both an anthropological dimension and a level of grace.<sup>1031</sup> It is in fact “just *a single Christian religious event*, in which the one is not infrastructure and the other superstructure!”<sup>1032</sup> With this, he aims at explaining that the faithful in a congregation gathered in God’s name have different liturgical roles, each has its own capacity, but “without mystification of any particular role.”<sup>1033</sup> Second, he attends to the old debate on *opus operatum* and *opus operantis* and states that the second (the subjective side of the sacrament) is intrinsically part of the first (the objective side).<sup>1034</sup> His explanation is that “the two aspects combined are the actual performance that mediates God’s gratuitous condescension and are not tagged on it afterwards.”<sup>1035</sup> He also clarifies that according to his mind, “in the *opus operatum* (of which the *opus operantis* is an essential part) God’s free gratuitous gift is decisive: “through devoutly experienced human ritual performances – independent of human merit – it allows participants in the liturgy to share in the abundance of God’s goodwill.”<sup>1036</sup> Third, he holds that “linking ‘sign’ with causation is a categorical error.”<sup>1037</sup> He reminds of Aquinas interpretation that “instrumental causation of the sacraments is non-physically, that is analogously.”<sup>1038</sup> He explains that in a different philosophical framework to Thomas Aquinas’s it is possible to say that, “the performative

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<sup>1028</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>1029</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>1030</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>1031</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1032</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1033</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1034</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>1035</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1036</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1037</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1038</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.



signification of a religious ritual as a whole is sufficient; anthropologically the sacraments have no need whatever of a supplementary instrumental cause transcending the efficacious ritual of the Christian faith.”<sup>1039</sup> He insists on that, “The meaningful ritual in its entirety, being human expression and vehicle of (ecclesial *and* individual) religious inspiration of all participants, *is* the actual gift of grace.”<sup>1040</sup>

In his outline of a new sacramental theology he turns back to his earlier approach in *De sacramentele heilseconomie* (1952) and *Christus, sacrament van de Godsontmoeting* (Christ, Sacrament of the Encounter with God) (1958, 1959). He discusses the title of his essay “Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments: Ritualizing Religious Elements in Daily Life” emphasising that he derived the term from a theological-methodological approach found in new research of empirical ethnology and cultural anthropology that gave him new insight.<sup>1041</sup> To study the phenomenon of rites in terms of the model of ‘rituality’ was according to Schillebeeckx “a veritable theological treasure trove.”<sup>1042</sup> Inspired from this he said that the title of his eventual new book translated into English would be “Jesus’s Vision and His Way of God’s Kingdom” and that he planned the subtitle to be “Experiences of Meaning and Contrast Distilled to Ritual”<sup>1043</sup> Distillation is for Schillebeeckx related to surrender and purification.<sup>1044</sup> With this, he reconnects to his theology of Jesus’ contrast experience. An experience of Christ of the “Abba” and the opposition of “this world” in trusting surrender to the Father in obedience is interpreted as a contrast-experience.<sup>1045</sup> Schillebeeckx explores this idea further by pointing to the possibility for Christians to mirror this by giving witness to their faith in the world trusting the “everlastingly present God and his love for human beings.”<sup>1046</sup> Schillebeeckx

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<sup>1039</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1040</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1041</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>1042</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1043</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>1044</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1045</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>1046</sup> *Ibid.*

relates this to the ordinary life in which “sparks of the grace of God’s kingdom” continually ‘irrupts’ into human history.<sup>1047</sup> Sacraments are moments in which such sparks enters the life.

Another point that is underscored by Schillebeeckx is that “sacraments have two dimensions one anthropological, the other -merging with it-focussed on God.”<sup>1048</sup> Rituals consist of both *legomenon* (ministry of the word) and *drómenon* (enactments).<sup>1049</sup> These two components jointly constitute “a single, indivisible, performative, dynamic, and meaningful happening executed in word and actions”<sup>1050</sup> This is important in order to understand Schillebeeckx’s further assessment of sacrament. In sacramental liturgy, the performance accomplishes efficaciously what it intends, Schillebeeckx holds.<sup>1051</sup> They “effect an encounter with God in a special way.”<sup>1052</sup> Sacraments belong to the category of symbols and signs and are a place for the encounter with God. Schillebeeckx ends this discussion with a statement of the importance of corporality for salvation.<sup>1053</sup>

### **Conclusion on Sacrifice, Real Presence and Communion**

In this chapter, I have started with Schillebeeckx’s first period and tried to follow his arguments for his emphasis on the personal communication of Christ in the Eucharist and his introduction of a somewhat new interpretation of the meaning and purpose of the bread and wine. He teaches that when men and women give meaning to things and acts as well as the initial meaning, the creative meaning comes from God. It is only with the faith and the acceptance, which includes the faulty and incomplete perception, that the ordinary bread and wine is understood as distinct after the change. With this faith and acceptance, the members of the Church enter into the communion given in the meal by Christ’s giving of himself.

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<sup>1047</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>1048</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1049</sup> *Ibid.*, 6; 26.

<sup>1050</sup> *Ibid* 26-27.

<sup>1051</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>1052</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>1053</sup> *Ibid.*

Schillebeeckx affirms the significance of active participation in the Eucharist; the gift that Christ gives finds reciprocity when participants in the Eucharist respond by giving themselves in, with and through Christ to the Father. There is no doubt that Schillebeeckx believes the dogma of transubstantiation and that he tries to explain this mystery for contemporary men and women.<sup>1054</sup> The eucharistic meal is central to Schillebeeckx because it is in this that the sacramental presence of Christ is found and men and women take part in the salvific life-giving death of the Lord.

During his second period, Schillebeeckx did not explicitly deal with the Eucharist. But there is a continuity between his interest in sacrament and experience because both are investigations of what happens to men and women when they come into contact with the presence of God.<sup>1055</sup>

In his discussion on praxis, Schillebeeckx connects faith in God with the work Christians are invited to do for the reign of God that includes people at the margin and includes the whole world. This can be seen as connected to the transformation of men and women, a conversion that takes place at the Eucharist where the gifts are given to be shared with everyone.

Evaluating Schillebeeckx's interpretation of the interrelationship between sacrifice, meal and communion is difficult, since he seems to avoid a discussion on the eucharistic sacrifice. However, he treats the bodily presence of Christ as important. The incarnation is fundamental to Schillebeeckx and the Church is seen as a kind of enlarged body. Interpersonally, intersubjectivity and experience are other concepts that are central to Schillebeeckx. His treatment of the resurrection might depend on his insistence on the negative character of Jesus' crucifixion and the need for a divine correcting victory over the negativity of his crucifixion.<sup>1056</sup> This aspect is important to consider in Schillebeeckx's theology. He is not

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<sup>1054</sup> See Erik Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx: A Theologian in His History*, 339.

<sup>1055</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, 204.

<sup>1056</sup> See Hilbert and Schreier, eds, *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, 98.

neglecting the sacrifice of Christ's gift of his life on the Cross, rather he is emphasising the sharing of Christ's life in the life-giving meal. Schillebeeckx's understanding is that the interrelationship between men and women with God and each other is a most intimate and important moment. It is the emphasise on the activity, the eucharistic meal, where the gifts are consumed that is the high point. The active participation in the Eucharist is central for Schillebeeckx as it also was at Vatican II. There is no doubt that Schillebeeckx holds that the active participation in Christ at the Eucharist is a meeting with the living Christ.

Schillebeeckx uses sign as a way to express the sacramental presence and finds the "how" of the presence within the "why." The eucharistic meal is the centre for Schillebeeckx and in this he finds a reciprocal relationship of gift between Christ and the congregation. Perhaps the meal is the "how" for Schillebeeckx and the "why" might be that the meal makes Christ closely present to men and women. Schillebeeckx does not write that it is the sacrifice of Christ that is made present, but the person of Christ is present at the meal. Schillebeeckx does not place the sacrifice as central to the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence, and communion. There is a progressive development in his thought, with modifications, largely in response to criticism of his writing, and this makes it difficult to evaluate Schillebeeckx's writings. His teaching seems to be different between his first and second period. This is perhaps because when Schillebeeckx uses phenomenology as an interpretive key in theological reflection he ends up in abandoning dogmatic theology as a starting point and arrives at critical hermeneutics.<sup>1057</sup>

A further evaluation of the eucharistic theology of Schillebeeckx will be given in chapter six: "Evaluation of the contributions of Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx, and David Power in the light of Vatican II."

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<sup>1057</sup> See William J. Hill, "A theology in Transition," in Hilbert and Schreiter, eds, *The Praxis of the reign of God*, 13.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PRESENTATION OF POWER'S EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY

#### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the significance of sacrifice, real presence and communion as interpreted by David Noel Power's approach to the Eucharist. Throughout this conversation, I will present some of David Powers' major challenges to the traditional research on the Eucharist. I shall study how he returns to the classical texts in a new reconsideration of the Eucharist. At the core of this investigation are David Power's best known works on the Eucharist as sacrifice and as sacrament.

The research field that David Power covers in his treatment of the sacrifice of the Eucharist is large. Besides studies of sacrifice in the New Testament, in pre- and post-Nicene theology, in medieval thought before and at Trent, in Reformer writings, and in Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, he has made a great contribution in using hermeneutics of language in order to find new ways of revitalizing the concept of sacrifice.

I shall start this chapter with a biography on David Power and then I shall discuss four of Power's contributions to eucharistic theology: first, his discussion on the relation between sacrifice and sacrament; second, his comprehension of sacrifice and gift; third, his discussion on eucharistic presence; fourth how he uses the concept of gift to understand the Eucharist as communion.

To follow the writing of Power this chapter will deal with discussions offered on gift and gift-giving and on the limits they have in order to discuss Christian sacramental economy. The paradigm of the iconic will be used as a means to understand the way in which gift appears and is given. The sacramental causality and symbolic causality will be set within due boundaries, and an attempt will be made to explain how sacramental gift transforms the lives of participants

of the sacraments and of the Church. Furthermore, analogies will be used to discuss an economy of sacramental gift. Lastly, a brief discussion will be made of how we may reflect on what is revealed and communicated of the mystery of trinity in the sacramental economy.<sup>1058</sup> The metaphor of gift is used by Power to describe the sacramental dispensation as an economy of gift. The economy is used in the sense of sharing in what is communal possession or is taken in the sense of exchange.

### ***Biography***

David Power was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1932. After studies with the Christian Brothers, he entered the Order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. In 1956, he was ordained a priest after having finished his seminary formation in Rome. After a period in Ireland where he taught dogmatic theology, he returned to Rome in 1964 to continue his theological formation. In 1968, he completed his doctorate at the Pontifical Institute of San Anselmo with his dissertation *Ministers of Christ and His Church*.<sup>1059</sup> During the years 1969-1971, he taught at the Milltown Institute of Philosophy, Dublin. He returned to Rome for the years 1971-74 and taught at both the Angelicum and the Gregorian. During the years from 1974 to 1977, he was assistant professor at the Gregorian University. After these years in Europe, he moved to the USA in 1977 and was offered a position at the Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., as a professor of systematic theology. In the following years, he also worked as director of the liturgical program of studies. As a professor emeritus, he has taught in Ottawa, Canada and at the local seminary in French Polynesia.

For many years, Power has been the editor of the *International Theological Review* and

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<sup>1058</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 276.

<sup>1059</sup> See Kenneth Hannon, "David Noel Power: Searcher for the Riches of God," eds. Michael Downey and Richard Fragomeni, *Studies in Honour of David Noel Power: A Promise of Presence* (Washington, D.C: Pastoral Press, 1992), 309.

*Concilium*.<sup>1060</sup> David Power presided over the *North American Academy of Liturgy* during the years 1987 to 1988. He has contributed as an editorial consultant to *Mission* and *Theological Studies*. Among his publications that I shall discuss are: *The Sacrifice We Offer: The Tridentine Dogma and Its Reinterpretation* (1991), *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition* (1992),<sup>1061</sup> *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving* (1999),<sup>1062</sup> *Love Without Calculation: Reflection of Divine Kenosis* (2005),<sup>1063</sup> *The Language of Sacramental Memorial*,<sup>1064</sup> and *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of Liturgy*.<sup>1065</sup>

### ***Sacrifice and Sacrament***

David Power holds that it is vital to know how to use general principles in order to understand dogmas. He starts his research on eucharistic sacrifice by determining what questions existed before the Council of Trent. His aim is to restore some of the sacredness of the tradition about the Eucharist that he considers lost.<sup>1066</sup> He suggests a reinterpretation of the treatment of the Eucharist at the Second Vatican Council. Power accentuates that the shift from modernity to post-modernity needs re-thinking of sacramental theology.<sup>1067</sup> His aim is to find a way of explaining the Eucharist to contemporary Christians. David Power's approach to revitalizing the eucharistic mystery is by use of hermeneutics, especially the role of language and of symbol.<sup>1068</sup> He analyses how symbolic language gives insights into the nature of liturgy.<sup>1069</sup>

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<sup>1060</sup> Cf. Kevin R. Seasoltz, "David N. Power: Searcher for the Riches of God," ed. Dwight W. Vogel, *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology: A Reader* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 178-179.

<sup>1061</sup> Power, D. N. *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition*. (New York: Crossroad, 1994).

<sup>1062</sup> David Power, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*. (New York: Crossroad, 1999).

<sup>1063</sup> David Power, *Love Without Calculation: A Reflection on Divine Kenosis*. (New York: Crossroad, 2005).

<sup>1064</sup> Power "The Language of Sacramental Memorial: Rupture, Excess and Abundance", in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, eds. L. Boeve and L. Leijssen, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001).

<sup>1065</sup> Power, *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of Liturgy*, (New York: Pueblo, 1984).

<sup>1066</sup> *Ibid.*, 13. His method is to review liturgical traditions and search into "the polysemy of rites, symbols, and texts and into the circumstances and processes of their ongoing interpretation."

<sup>1067</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 12-17. For Power it is important when appropriating a tradition "to see postmodern evaluations as a critique of sedimentation and of imposed order."

<sup>1068</sup> See David Power "The Language of Sacramental Memorial" in Lieven Boeve, *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, eds. Lieven Boeve and Lambert Leijssen, 138-139.

<sup>1069</sup> Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, 146.

The liturgy's nature is an action of God and of the Church. It is a memorial action, which relates to God's action in history. In his argumentation, he gives special attention to sacramentality and its relation to sacramental presence.<sup>1070</sup> He considers memorial, representation and metaphor all means to understand the eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>1071</sup> Power's notion of sacramental gift of self-giving is a way to understand the Eucharist as a gift of love.<sup>1072</sup>

Power treats on Thomas Aquinas' view on how the Mass may be offered as a sacrifice as well as a sacrament, and how the Mass relates to sacrifice.<sup>1073</sup> Power highlights that sacrifice must not be identified with offering; it is only when something is done to the things offered, such as immolation, holocaust, or consecration, that a sacrifice is carried out.<sup>1074</sup> Aquinas explains this is what makes the sacrifice a priestly act.<sup>1075</sup> Aquinas explicitly points out that the whole people offer gifts at the offering part of the Mass.<sup>1076</sup> Raymond Moloney points out and clarifies the teaching of Vatican II which does not regard the presentation of the gifts of bread and wine as an offering, the offering takes place during the Eucharistic Prayer.<sup>1077</sup> Power's opinion is clear as to who is offering. He repeats Aquinas's statement that the offering of prayers in the Mass is offered in the person of the whole Church in which the priest is its minister.<sup>1078</sup>

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<sup>1070</sup> See David N. Power, "Sacrament: Event Eventing," eds. Michael Downey and Richard Fragomeni, *Studies in Honour of David N. Power: A Promise of Presence* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press), 271-99.

<sup>1071</sup> Power, *Unsearchable Riches*, 108-143.

<sup>1072</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 11, 323-324.

<sup>1073</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 228.

<sup>1074</sup> See *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 229.

<sup>1075</sup> See *ST*, II a II ae; q.85, a. 3.

<sup>1076</sup> *ST*, III, q. 82, a. 6. "...Oration in Missa profertur a sacerdote in persona totius ecclesiae, cuius sacerdos est minister."; See *ST*, III, q.83, a. 4. Aquinas refers to the prayers of the canon of the Mass where he finds an offering of the sacrifice; Cf. Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 229.

<sup>1077</sup> Cf. Raymond Moloney, *Rediscovering The Eucharist* (Dublin: Messenger Publication, 2012), 21. He observes that one of the greatest changes of Vatican II was to clarify that the first part of the Eucharistic liturgy is the preparation of the gifts. It is not the case that "we first offer bread and wine on their own, as it were, in the kind of offering bread and wine and other fruits of the earth which we find in many religions." "What is offered in the Mass is the one offering of the New Law, our Lord's body and blood, into which our gifts have been changed. That is the one and only offering of the Mass." The prayer to express this is in the Eucharistic Prayer

<sup>1078</sup> See David Power, "Representing Christ in Community and Sacrament," in Donald J. Goergen, ed. *Being a Priest today* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1992), 115; 120 for a further discussion. Cf. Kelly A. Raab, *When Women become Priests: The Catholic Women's Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 41 for a discussion on *in persona Christi* and *in persona ecclesiae*. In contrast to Butler who sees *persona*



However, at the consecration when the priest uses the words of Christ to consecrate, Aquinas identifies the offering as the sacrifice that unites the sacrifice of the Mass with that of the cross. In other words, at the consecration the representation of Christ's sacrifice is carried out in the person of the priest, and it is with the prayers of the canon that the offering of the sacrifice to the Father by Christ is carried out after being offered by the Church.<sup>1079</sup> David Power underlines that Thomas makes a distinction between the efficacy of the Eucharist as a sacrament and its efficacy as a sacrifice.<sup>1080</sup> As Power highlights, it is in receiving Christ in communion that "the faithful are healed from sin, nourished, inebriated with love, and joined with Christ in his self-offering."<sup>1081</sup> The explanation is that the Eucharist is the commemoration of the sacrifice and has its efficacy from it. The Church may offer the Eucharist as a sacrifice because Christ "still acts as the high-priest and mediator in heaven."<sup>1082</sup>

### *Eucharist as a Language Event and the Council of Trent*

The reason for this section is that Vatican II confirms the teaching on the sacrifice of the Mass made at Trent. My goal is to look at Power's theology in the light of Vatican II, thus the following discussion.

David Power finds a basic problem in the texts of the Council of Trent (1547-51) when it comes to sacrifice. He warns against the limitations of language used at Trent when treating dogmas. He points to the importance of using the language not only for understanding, but for imagination and poesy as well. When this is ignored, he holds, dogma loses its root in the

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*ecclesiae* as a sign of the communion of Christ and Church only because the priest first *acts in persona Christi*, this leads to maintaining the position that only men can be priests. David Power has the contrary position and offers an alternative standpoint. "For David Power *in persona Christi* refers to 'the recapitulation of the renewed human, in which from one point of view male and female together constitute the *one*,' and in which from another 'there is neither male or female,'" Cf. Raab, *When Women become Priests*, 41-42 "It is within the context of the unity of the church (*in persona ecclesiae*), according to Power, that the role of the ordained minister is made most clear."

<sup>1079</sup> See explanation by Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 229.

<sup>1080</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 228-29. See Aquinas' explanation that persons that do not receive communion benefit from the sacrifice of the Mass but not from the sacrament of the Mass. See *ST*, III, q.79, a. 7.

<sup>1081</sup> Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 229.

<sup>1082</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 229. Power's reference to *ST*, III, q.79, a. and a.7.

symbolic and the experiential.<sup>1083</sup> If only the conceptual content is expressed, the potential for meaning of the original symbol is lost and the result is a reduction both in the cognitive and affective power of the dogma.<sup>1084</sup> Power exemplifies this loss of meaning by explaining how the symbol of original sin has lost its power over the course of time. The notion of sin as Power understands it, “derives from narrative and other forms of imaginative discourse, which are addressed to the experience of sin that *englobes* human consciousness and human life.”<sup>1085</sup> Power declares that when the word “sin” is placed in a doctrinal context its roots with the poetic texts wherein it has its birth are largely lost.<sup>1086</sup> What happens is that “it is made to stand for a set of ideas and concepts rather than for a world of meaning in which psychic roots and affective intent take their place alongside the cognitive.”<sup>1087</sup> This problem of losing the roots of the word sin, Power finds, is a similar problem to that which arises when the concepts sacrifice of the Mass, propitiation and satisfaction are used in the texts of the Council of Trent. In the next five paragraphs I shall follow some of his arguments on this.<sup>1088</sup>

First, he states that sacrifice, propitiation and satisfaction belong to the order of conceptualised symbols.<sup>1089</sup> Second, he explains that the term satisfaction came from a juridical penitential system.<sup>1090</sup> The aim was the ordering of society. However, a problem arose when the word was used in dogmatic theology and was applied to “a notion of divine justice and for a concept of sin that is practically equated with an injury done to divine honour and right and, as far as the mass is concerned for a very practical system of making reparation and reducing sin’s consequences.”<sup>1091</sup> Third, Power finds that the word *sacrifice* in the decree on the sacrifice of the Mass is a limitation to the understanding of the Mass because it is expressed in very narrow

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<sup>1083</sup> See Power, *The Sacrifice we Offer*, 150.

<sup>1084</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1085</sup> See *ibid.*, 151.

<sup>1086</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1087</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1088</sup> See *ibid.*, 151-54 for a detailed analyse of the term sacrifice as used at the Council of Trent.

<sup>1089</sup> See *ibid.*, 151.

<sup>1090</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1091</sup> See *ibid.*, 151.

terms.<sup>1092</sup> Only terms related to the offering or sacrifice were used. From this follows that terms such as consecration and oblation were used and not, as Power would have desired, a fuller capture of other images such as eschatological banquet, Passover, food and drink. Fourth, the conceptual symbol of sacrifice “affected also the remembrance of the death, of which it is the sacramental representation.”<sup>1093</sup> This was then reduced “to images as of a meritorious and satisfactory offering to the Father.” Power points to other images that were not treated or were subordinated to the conceptual symbol of sacrifice. Power would have preferred a variety of terms such as “redemption, victory over death, the entry into the heavenly sanctuary through the shedding of blood, or the figures of the martyr, eschatological prophet and judge, whereby the death of Christ may be significantly remembered.”<sup>1094</sup> In this discussion Power has demonstrated a limitation by Trent to understand the eucharistic mystery with cognitive notions. He has stated that in not recognising this aspect the Council was making a great loss. Instead of the approach made by Trent Power gives suggestions for a new approach.

Having explained his view on the restricting aspects of a cognitive approach, Power moves on to discuss the specific *image* of sacrifice itself. In addition to the first approach, which shows the restrictions inherent in using the image of sacrifice that results in a lack of the full use of the potential reference and meaning, there is also a second restriction. By giving primacy to only one special kind of sacrifice, the propitiatory sacrifice, there is a great constriction in understanding. Other kinds of sacrifice are either not mentioned or are treated as of secondary importance. Power emphasises that not only were terms such as thanksgiving or peace-offering not mentioned in the official teaching, the teaching was also expressed in a way that “seemed to register opposition instead of harmony between a theology of the Mass as

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<sup>1092</sup> See *ibid.*, 152.

<sup>1093</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1094</sup> See *ibid.*

thanksgiving and a theology of the Mass as propitiation.”<sup>1095</sup> What is more, the propitiatory and the expiatory sacrifice were not regarded as different from each other but as one and the same type of sacrifice. As Power comments, “a need to make satisfaction to God was highlighted.”<sup>1096</sup> Power suggests that the imaginative aspect would have been better grasped by notions such as “imagery covenant and the images of the divine initiative in granting peace and pardon possible.”<sup>1097</sup>

I have now showed how Power makes a claim that there are manifold limitations inherent in the Tridentine teaching. He highlights that both the *word* sacrifice and the *image* of sacrifice were badly restricted from their full range of possibilities and in addition to this, there was a confusion between propitiatory and expiatory sacrifice.

Finally, I shall attend to the *ritual* of sacrifice. Power claims that the Council of Trent equated sacrificial ritual with offering. He holds that this is yet another limitation because attention was not given to other aspects such as “sprinkling with blood (unless it was equated with immolation or offering), the recitative of God’s mighty deeds, and the prayer of memorial.”<sup>1098</sup> He notes that even communion was mentioned only as participation in the fruits of sacrifice, and not in its own right. The power of *metaphor* and *metaphorical* use of words was also omitted in the texts of the Council, and there was a tendency “to see the real and the metaphorical as mutually exclusive, or to take the metaphorical as only a linguistic exclusive, intended to illustrate points of doctrine.”<sup>1099</sup>

With these arguments from David Power, I have tried to demonstrate that he has many critical comments on the doctrinal text of the Council of Trent. I have chosen to present these as a basis for later discussions. Power considers the Eucharist an event and language is of

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<sup>1095</sup> See *ibid.*, 152-53.

<sup>1096</sup> See *ibid.*, 153.

<sup>1097</sup> See *ibid.*, Power also points to the fact that a text on the initiative of God’s love and mercy was taken away in the final version.

<sup>1098</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1099</sup> See *ibid.*

utmost importance in this act, but as I shall demonstrate Power considers the ritual the most consistent action when the Eucharist is celebrated in different cultures. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the central theme of my thesis and I shall discuss Power's insightful analysis on how to understand sacrifice from different approaches.

*Sacrifice Understood from Images, Signs, Symbols, and Metaphor*

A key to David Power's theology of the sacramental sacrifice besides the notion of event is his notion of images, signs, symbols, metaphor. These are ways for understanding and expressing the Eucharistic act and sacrifice. When he discusses images, he starts with historical "master images" as images that continue to be used throughout tradition in connection with an on-going series of events.<sup>1100</sup> Master images constitute links connecting the events both before and after a central event, and these links help to interpret each single event in a context. Power considers these events, which often are unexpected, and how they express new insights into the root metaphors of a tradition.<sup>1101</sup> It is in their predication, Power insists, that the metaphors offer meaning. It is by way of an open sign that reality is redescribed.<sup>1102</sup> It is in their predication that images offer meaning.<sup>1103</sup> In this way images as of covenant, exile, and kingdom speak of historical events and are inserted into the ongoing and future-oriented historical tradition.<sup>1104</sup>

The image of sacrifice thus speaks of both Christ's death and the Eucharist.<sup>1105</sup> Power connects the power of language and transformation of reality. He remarks that had the "light of the power of language" been applied using the metaphoric nature of Christian sacrificial language, "much of the acrimony surrounding the nature of the Eucharist as sacrifice would

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<sup>1100</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 55.

<sup>1101</sup> See *ibid.*, 52.

<sup>1102</sup> See Power, "The Language of Sacramental Memorial," 142.

<sup>1103</sup> See *ibid.*, 52.

<sup>1104</sup> See *ibid.*, 51.

<sup>1105</sup> See *ibid.*, 55.

have been avoided.”<sup>1106</sup> Power claims that the Eucharist is a sacrifice in a metaphorical sense, its origins coming from the New Testament, not from the cultic sense in the Old Testament.<sup>1107</sup> Sacrifice in the metaphorical sense is rooted in the power of language to transform reality.<sup>1108</sup> Power explains that there is no univocal meaning to sacrifice but a metaphorical use that is applied to the three realities: the Christian life, the memorial liturgy and Christ’s death. With this he points to the polysemy of the word sacrifice.<sup>1109</sup> He states that the word sacrifice is used in Paul’s letters to describe the redemption from sin. Sacrifice is related, Power says, to an appreciation of the gift given by Christ and of the exchange affected thereby.<sup>1110</sup> This clearly points to sacrifice as a gift and that the one acting is Christ.

### *Sacrifice as Gift*

In order to clarify sacrifice and gift, Power addresses the important issue of who is the presider of the Eucharist. He argues that there was initially no cultic power attached to presiding at the Eucharist. To prove this he refers to the writing of Marliangeas,<sup>1111</sup> who emphasized that naming the presider of the Eucharist priest initially was “nothing more than what was meant by designating the prayer or the blessed gifts a sacrifice.”<sup>1112</sup> Power holds that the focus of the memorial in John Chrysostom’s Divine Liturgy changed from the memorial’s relation to past and future into a representation of the heavenly (or transcendent) reality. This was a result of priority and cultic power given to the sacrificial act of the Eucharist.<sup>1113</sup> By this change, the language of sacrifice resumed a cultic and mythic character. Power concludes that “it appealed anew to the cultic shedding of blood and the offering of victims as a way of escaping evil and

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<sup>1106</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 320.

<sup>1107</sup> See *ibid.*, 56.

<sup>1108</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1109</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1110</sup> See *ibid.*, the discussion 320-324.

<sup>1111</sup> See *ibid.*, 321 for this reference to B. Marliangeas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère: In Persona Christi, In Persona Ecclesiae* (Paris: Ed. Beauchesne, 1978).

<sup>1112</sup> See, Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 321.

<sup>1113</sup> See *ibid.*

making retribution for sin.” He continues, “[A]s things stand at present, the language of priesthood and sacrifice needs to be once more demythologized.”<sup>1114</sup> When explaining the need for demythologization, David Power argues for the use of the language of sacrifice as a language of reversal, language that reverses the quest to restore order by preparing victims and appeasing a threatening anger. He refers to a context wherein eschatological hope promises a divine expiation and liberation. Power continues: “Faith in God’s mercy as offered in Christ takes over from the urge to propitiate divine anger or to seek other intermediaries.”<sup>1115</sup> Instead of violent actions, the demythologization of sacrifice is a non-violent action that brings about the power of communion. With the use of sacrifice as a “language of reversal,” which means giving up the universal instinct to “make sacrifice” as a self-oblation of mortified desire, the reign of God is promoted, giving way to the gift of oneself for others in truth and justice.<sup>1116</sup> He emphasizes further that “It is then as the language of reversal, a reversal brought about by remembrance of the blood of Christ, that the essential aspect of the doctrine of sacrifice has to be recaptured.”<sup>1117</sup>

Communion with a forgiving God is possible. The reversal of a God that demands satisfaction to this forgiving God may be celebrated without recourse to a language of sacrifice. An example of images to use is the conflict between darkness and light.<sup>1118</sup> David Power says in contrast to Louis-Marie Chauvet that it is not in the symbolism of the exchange of gifts, but in the free gift of God that the language of sacrifice is reversed.<sup>1119</sup> His reason for this is that in thanksgiving and ritual sharing it is the gratuitous and gracious presence of God that is the focal point.<sup>1120</sup> It is in this light that the doctrine of sacrifice has to be seen. The way forward, Power suggests, is a language of reversal made possible by the act of remembrance.

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<sup>1114</sup> See *ibid.*, 322.

<sup>1115</sup> See *ibid.*, 323.

<sup>1116</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1117</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1118</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1119</sup> Cf. Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 266-316.

<sup>1120</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 324.

In recent years sacrifice has begun to be seen as integral to Christianity and has been discussed from a new perception as belonging together with gift and gift in abundance. One example of this is in David Power's book *Sacrament* where he interprets sacrament as the language of God's giving. In his chapter *Rendering Account of Sacramental Action*, he gives systematic reflections on the event of gift.<sup>1121</sup> For Power, gift has to be related to event, both to the event of Jesus Christ and to the language event of sacrament.<sup>1122</sup> He explains that the gift/giving of God through Word and Spirit is "manifested in the sacramental self-giving of Christ and through the memorial of his death and in the gift of the Spirit which works from within to allow the Church to take this memorial into the actuality of Christian community."<sup>1123</sup> In my thesis, I hold that the sacrifice of the Mass is central to the Eucharist. Power's view of the Eucharist as an economy of gift/self-giving of Christ is thus relevant. Power underlines the aspect of the Eucharist as sacrament. He is very clear in his understanding of the centrality of the communion table in the rite. He reminds his readers that it is not the consecration or any gift made by the Church to God that is central, but God's gift given through the Word and the Spirit. Christ is self-emptying on the Cross, and the sacrament of the Eucharist is given as a memorial of this self-gift. Regarding the economy of gift, Power holds that:

The gift was given in the sending of the Word and the Spirit. It was given through the self-emptying of Christ in his mission and on the Cross. It is given through the sacrament left to the Church on the eve of the passion and as a memorial of this passionate self-gift. The Eucharist is an economy of gift, where the gift is from God, of and through Christ and the Spirit, and the communion table is the central rite, not the consecration nor any gift made by the Church to God.<sup>1124</sup>

At this point it seems that Power finds that emphasizing communion in the memorial rite is more important than emphasizing the sacrifice, although the self-emptying of Christ always is the point of departure.

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<sup>1121</sup> See Power, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, 274-75.

<sup>1122</sup> See *ibid.*, 275.

<sup>1123</sup> See *ibid.*, 85.

<sup>1124</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-86.



Power emphasises that the Father gives gifts with a twofold gift of Word and Spirit. The sacramental elements of bread, wine, oil, and water are gifts received by men and women. The gift/giving is continually manifested in the sacramental self-giving of Christ both through the memorial of his death and in the gift of the Spirit. The working from within by the Spirit makes it possible for the Church to take this memorial into the actuality of Christian community.<sup>1125</sup> The communion with God is present in the Church, which is the communion with God in charity. The interplay between praise, thanksgiving and doxology reflect the reception of the gift. It may be interpreted as one continuing moment going into the next and returning to contemplation of God and God's love.<sup>1126</sup>

### *Gift as Event*

Yet another approach to gift and sacrament is made by Power. He presents explanations on how the language of gift makes it possible to give a systematic reflection that is not grounded in the thought of language of being and does not resort to theorems of causality.<sup>1127</sup> Theology begins, writes Power, with doxology, in awe and wonder of sacramental gift.<sup>1128</sup> The gift is related to event, both the event of Jesus Christ and to the event of sacrament. Metaphorical words speak of the Gift given and evoke the use of analogies of gift-giving among ourselves.<sup>1129</sup>

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<sup>1125</sup> See *ibid.*, 85.

<sup>1126</sup> See *ibid.*, 86.

<sup>1127</sup> Cf. Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 270 on Schillebeeckx use of symbolic causality instead of efficient instrumental causality for a fuller account of the interpersonal. By use of the symbol he developed the understanding of the Thomistic theology in using sign and related symbol to the reality and the assembly of the faithful and not on the emphasis on the role of the priest as did Thomas Aquinas; *Ibid.*, 275. Power explains the development made by Schillebeeckx in *The Eucharist* on the symbolic causality to explain the difference of the symbolic and the ontological. "Ontological language is necessary to express that which is beyond the power of signification."; *ibid.*, 277. "Instead of using the terms of instrumental causality, they highlighted what symbol and symbolic exchange express beyond the simpler notion of sign as a conveyor of knowledge."; *Ibid.*, 275. "The modern emphasis on sign and symbol and encounter helps us to see the part that the Eucharist has in human living but it does not sufficiently account for the transcendent aspect of the reality present and given in sacrament."; *Ibid.*, 277, "Within the context of personal encounter, the limits of sacramental meaning are placed within the limits of present reality and at the same time are seen to express the desire for communion with Christ in eschatological fullness."

<sup>1128</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 86.

<sup>1129</sup> See *ibid.*, 275.

### *Gift of Abundance*

In Power's book *Love Without Calculation - A Reflection on Divine Kenosis* the sacrifice of Christ is treated as the basis for the Eucharistic sacrifice. He holds that the Liturgy or common worship is the primary place for the word of God to be heard, interpreted and appropriated and that this gives a foundation for further theological reflection.<sup>1130</sup> He sees the Eucharist in connection with the whole redemption, and in order to study the kenosis of Christ he refers to the Anaphora of Basil the Great in the Byzantine Liturgy and the liturgy of the Holy Week in the liturgy of the Roman rite.<sup>1131</sup> He starts with Phil 2:6-11 and finds four important ideas that shed light on the the kenosis of Christ: the self-emptying of Christ, the role as a slave, the human likeness, and the humiliation of the death on a Cross. All are needed to explain the mystery of Christ, and these aspects all belong together. Power makes a connection between the utmost humbling of Christ by obeying God, the behaviour towards others and the lowest rank, the dying on a cross.<sup>1132</sup> Power points out that there is a mystery of *admirable commercium* in the gift Christ makes of himself, an amazing exchange that is not to be understood, as "there is no reciprocation in the exchange."<sup>1133</sup> "It is an exchange in which God receives nothing and the world appears as pure gift, existing only in the breath of divine exchange."<sup>1134</sup> This is how Power arrives at regarding the Eucharist as having sacramental abundance. It is because it is a pure gift.

In the Roman Catholic liturgy, there is a tight relation between word and actions. Power suggests that the interplay between language and action offers some insights, "How we speak makes a difference to what we do, and what we do makes a difference to how we speak. Humans look for meaningful action and for meaning in their action."<sup>1135</sup> He connects the

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<sup>1130</sup> Power, *Love Without Calculation*, 5-7.

<sup>1131</sup> See *ibid.*, 5.

<sup>1132</sup> See *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>1133</sup> David N. Power, "Sacramental Abundance: An economy of Gift" in *The Way*, 1999, 90 (90-99).

<sup>1134</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1135</sup> See Power, *Love Without Calculation*, 77.

Eucharist to praxis when he states that it usually is the need for action that “throws out a challenge to the adequacy of the prevailing language.”<sup>1136</sup> Thus, he concludes that we have to search for a language that inspires a vision where ideals of service, peace and justice surpass and “where divine power features as quite OTHER.”<sup>1137</sup>

To develop the thoughts of the abundance of gift, Power explains his understanding of Pasch.<sup>1138</sup> The language of Pasch has a double significance according to Power. He begins by emphasising the Pascal Lamb as an expression of the suffering of Christ and the redemption given in his blood. Then he points out that the image of passing over expresses the change effected. From here Power explains that sacrament is the way believers pass, through the gift of the Spirit, into a new life. Accordingly, this life can be compared with the passage that Christ himself took through death to life. Power concludes that this points to a hope of the possibility to be liberated from slavery and is the way to freedom.<sup>1139</sup>

David Power sees the Pasch of Christ as a reference point, the *anno domini*, not a new era in time but a new vision, a gift of the Spirit through which “we pass from death to life.”<sup>1140</sup> The Eucharist is the memorial of the supreme gift of Christ, and of his *kenosis*. By donating his body his presence is found in this world in the Church. It is most interesting to follow how Power discusses the use of the word sacrifice. He clearly demonstrates the centrality of Christ in the sacrifice, the gifts are always received from God. He explains: “Christ offers it himself as representative of a race struggling in the compost of sin and death, and the Church offers it in his memorial and in his name and person. We have yet to retrieve a more fulsome sense of sacrifice, grounded in the exchange of gifts coming from God.”<sup>1141</sup>

The theology of the Church is, according to David Power, a continuation of a Christology

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<sup>1136</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1137</sup> See *ibid.*, 78.

<sup>1138</sup> See *ibid.*, 79

<sup>1139</sup> See *ibid.*, 80.

<sup>1140</sup> See *ibid.*, 108.

<sup>1141</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

that weaves together the sending of the Son and the sending of the Spirit. It is in the Church, Christ's body in the Spirit, that the triune and creator God makes tangible a divine presence.<sup>1142</sup> In this the Christians see a connection between the kenosis of the Son making the Trinity manifest and the way of kenosis that is the way for the Church to follow "through evangelical poverty in all forms that this may take."<sup>1143</sup> This dynamic way of interpreting the Church is, I believe, the framework from which Power understands the presence of Christ in the Church.

### *Eucharistic Presence*

#### *Eucharistic Presence as Gift*

I have already mentioned that for Power the self-emptying love of Christ given in his Cross and Resurrection is the fundament of Christian faith. This awareness of God's love is necessary in order to understand the eucharistic presence as gift. The gifts of salvation and redemption enrich those who celebrate the sacraments. As for the Eucharist, a focal point of giving and reception is found in the real presence of Christ and communion with him, in his body and blood.<sup>1144</sup> This is put in a beautiful way by Power who writes that "in every celebration, there is a new event-ing of this Gift," and 'fusion of horizons' reached across time within an openness of gift."<sup>1145</sup>

I have now discussed Power's use of the concepts sacrifice and gift. In the next two sections I shall be concerned with David Power's notion of language of sacramental memorial and sacramental presence understood as language event, narrative, and ritual.

#### *Sacramental Memorial Understood as Language Event*

David Power refers to Thomas Aquinas' description of the sacraments as signs in order to state

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<sup>1142</sup> See *ibid.*, 83.

<sup>1143</sup> See *ibid.*, 83.

<sup>1144</sup> See Power, *Sacrament* 323.

<sup>1145</sup> See *ibid.*, 11.

that sacramental celebrations take place in time and thus in a tension between past and future.<sup>1146</sup> He points to Aquinas's formulation that a sacrament is always an action in the present and has to be interpreted and experienced in relation to both past and future. David Power holds that what is given comes from the past and already is, as given, passing into the future. As an example of its importance for sacrament Power applies this to the presence of Christ himself "in truth" and not only to what is given in communion.<sup>1147</sup> Thus, he concludes that memorial and the liturgical language are related and that they express a transition and a tension.

Power understands post-modernity to emerge from a rupture with modernity and that this occurs through two types of suspicion/retrieval that are in conflict with each other. One is the retrieval of the medieval, which is not the way Power wants go. The other is the creative power of language. This is, asserts Power, the right direction to develop theology as it gives a new sensitivity and power to speak.<sup>1148</sup> This, he claims, is marked by the breakdown of narrative in the face of the repressed.<sup>1149</sup> Power explicitly articulates that understanding this is vital in order to note the praxis of the Eucharist. Furthermore, he points to the breakdown of order in the face of exclusions.<sup>1150</sup> He develops this argument in the light of suffering and emphasises Christ's self-giving. Power also finds also breakdown of ritual in the face of the sensual aesthetic of active forces in the world that have not been appropriated into Christian perceptions.<sup>1151</sup> All these thoughts influence the way that David Power presents the role of sacramental theology. The perception of sacrament as language-event is a way in which to engage in the discontinuous and the disruptive forces that characterize the sensitivity to broken time.<sup>1152</sup> For

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<sup>1146</sup> See Power "The Language of Sacramental Memorial" in Boeve, *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, eds. Boeve and Leijssen, 135.

<sup>1147</sup> See *ibid.*, 136.

<sup>1148</sup> See *ibid.*, 137-38.

<sup>1149</sup> See *ibid.*, 138.

<sup>1150</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1151</sup> See *ibid.*, 138.

<sup>1152</sup> See *ibid.*, 139.

Power the Sacrament of the Eucharist is by nature a rupture because of its character as memory and ritual reflecting past and present.

### *Sacramental Memorial as Narrative and Ritual*

The Eucharist is a memorial action. The eucharistic action is founded on the words of Christ: “do this in memory of me” and is thus both a narrative and a ritual. Power prefers to understand the nature of sacramental action and memorial as a language event.<sup>1153</sup> He explains that it is through the language that what is liberating or influential in an action is presented.<sup>1154</sup> As a language event, memorial allows God’s action to be seen in the past and in the present.<sup>1155</sup> Power notes a breaking down of narrative and ritual that is a “breaking-up” when it is confronted with those who are left out or left at the margins.<sup>1156</sup> Based on these insights Power considers the Eucharist an excess because the power to speak comes from appropriating the Sacrament as an open sign.<sup>1157</sup> This happens only when the *saying*, the *signifying*, becomes a process that is going on, not if it is left as a word *said* or *signified*.<sup>1158</sup> A ritual, continues Power, is then expressing the reality of God, a loving God that enters human time and events.<sup>1159</sup> It addresses the acting community, which responds to the Word proclaimed. In this exists a communication that speaks of “the love of God, of a gift of God that brings humans beyond, even out of, their limited temporality, with a promise for the future, it can be appropriated into the lives of peoples in other times, places, cultures.”<sup>1160</sup> Power holds that it is from the perspective of event that sacramental memorial is to be interpreted.<sup>1161</sup> He confirms that it is the appropriation of narrative through the forms of discourse that shape relationships

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<sup>1153</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 59.

<sup>1154</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 306.

<sup>1155</sup> See Power, *The Language of Sacramental Memorial*, 139.

<sup>1156</sup> See *ibid.*, 249.

<sup>1157</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1158</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1159</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 6.

<sup>1160</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1161</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 311.

within belief, and it is this act of memorial that has its importance in the Eucharistic prayer, not the fact that it is itself a narrative.<sup>1162</sup> Power reminds us that it is: “In light of the relation between event and language, Christ may be said to be present to the church in the word that brings the event of his pasch to word, that word in which his self-gift is renewed.”<sup>1163</sup> Power concludes from this that it is the resurrection of Christ that signifies the “limitless capacity to take form in those who become his body on earth,” and therefore the Eucharistic memorial is a power to event and event again in sacrament in new places and to incorporate persons and things into the communion of God’s love.<sup>1164</sup> For Power narrative and ritual come together into the event that is the Pasch of Christ. Power highlights that sacrament is the language of God’s giving. He points out that when memorial is celebrated in the community at the communion table the memorial of Christ’s Pasch is kept. As I have demonstrated, it is important for Power to return to the Eucharist as sacrament, and he finds the presence of Christ both in the Church as the body and in the sacramental communion.

### ***Eucharistic Communion***

#### *Sacramental Communion Founded on Gift*

I have already discussed Power’s contributions of considering sacrifice as gift, an event and an abundance of gift. I have also attended to his contribution of regarding the eucharistic presence as both gift and language-event. I agree with Jeanrond who want to emphasize the action of communion. The key to understanding Power’s contribution to eucharistic theology may be his insistent that all the faithful be included in the communion. I would say that he convincingly develops a theology of dialogue that starts from a theology of *koinonia*, communion.<sup>1165</sup> Power seems to agree with a theology of *koinonia*, which take into consideration “the Church’s

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<sup>1162</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1163</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1164</sup> See *ibid.*, 311-312.

<sup>1165</sup> See David N. Power, O.M.I., Roman Catholic Theologies of Eucharistic Communion: A Contribution to Ecumenical Conversation, in *Theological Studies* 57 (1996), 587-610.

participation in the *koinonia* of the Trinity through the Eucharist and looks at this in light of the missions of Word and Spirit in the economy of redemption.”<sup>1166</sup> As I have mentioned earlier his aim is to avoid eucharistic memorial, the eucharistic presence, and the eucharistic sacrifice as starting points. Perhaps this is why he proposes an understanding of eucharistic *koinonia* rooted in gift. However, starting from gift he also attends to the presence of Christ as central to the communion. In his discussions he then also use to approach sacrifice to make his view understood and hinder misconceptions. Power interprets Christ in his self-offering and with a parallel in the Church’s self-offering as a ground for the communion. He discusses how also how Hans Urs von Balthasar draws this further when he connects the relation between Christ and the Church as a shared eternal relation of the Son to the Father.<sup>1167</sup> The Eucharistic Prayer expresses both the kenosis of Christ and the Church’s eucharistic kenosis, and then the celebration moves to the high-point, the communion at the table, that Power holds to be the central action of the Eucharist.

### **Conclusion on Sacrifice, Real Presence and Communion**

David Power aims at a rethinking of sacramental theology in a foundational and somewhat radical way. He finds it important to use historical reconstruction, current hermeneutics, and postmodernity to critique “the sedimentation and imposed order in the tradition of the Church.”<sup>1168</sup> He wants to converse and communicate within a diversity of ways looking for a common referent and heritage.<sup>1169</sup> Sacraments are an “eventing of God’s grace and human response in verbal and nonverbal language within a given historical continuum in space and

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<sup>1166</sup> *Ibid*, 587.

<sup>1167</sup> See *ibid.*, 590. Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, “The Mass, a Sacrifice of the Church,” *Explorations in Theology 3: Creator Spirit*, (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993), 185-244.

<sup>1168</sup> Power, *Sacrament*, 13.

<sup>1169</sup> *Ibid.*



time.<sup>1170</sup> He underscores that to understand grace and the presence of mystery it is important to attend to the factors of absence.<sup>1171</sup> The eucharistic theology of David Power deals with sacrament as event-eventing, the language of sacrament as rupture, excess and abundance, rupture as memorial and ritual, excess of sacramental ritual, sacramental abundance and the event of God's kenotic giving in shaping community and the economy of Gift. Power expresses the mystery of the many names of God, and he finds "a connection between Love and Justice in naming God."<sup>1172</sup> He keeps the naming open but also connected to present day problems.<sup>1173</sup>

My research question deals with the Eucharist and the assessment of sacrifice, real presence and communion. With his approach to sacrifice Power challenges the way in which the Eucharist was presented at the Council of Trent. He demonstrated that Trent had a limited understanding of the eucharistic mystery because it mainly used cognitive notions and did not open to metaphor and metaphorical use of words. He states that sacrifice, propitiation and satisfaction belong to the order of conceptualised symbols. He finds that the word sacrifice and the image of sacrifice were used in a way that contributed to confusion between propitiatory and expiatory sacrifice. It also resulted in a subordination of images to the conceptual symbol of sacrifice. Power would have preferred that images such as "redemption, victory over death, entry into the heavenly sanctuary through shedding of blood" to have been used to make the death of Christ be significantly remembered. In his sacramental theology Power treats the eucharistic sacrifice from the perspective of sacramental memorial and sacrament as language. Keeping the memorial of the Christ event is to relate the present, "which is characteristically in flux, to the past and the future."<sup>1174</sup> The past has left traces and its testimony has" a power both

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<sup>1170</sup> Kenan B. Osborne, Theological Studies, Book Review *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving*, Dec 2001, Vol. 62, Issue 4, 853-54

<sup>1171</sup> Power, *Sacrament*, 13.

<sup>1172</sup> *Ibid.*, 90

<sup>1173</sup> See *ibid.*, 90.

<sup>1174</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

to change history and lives by a pattern of action which emerges from it.”<sup>1175</sup> This power comes from the use of language. The foundational story for Christian sacrament is the passion narrative and the resurrection accounts.<sup>1176</sup> Narrative is important but the appeal to “institution narratives” holds ambiguities.<sup>1177</sup> However, there are advantages because variant traditions allow different communities to appropriate the founding traditions to their own reading.<sup>1178</sup> It is evident that community has an important role in the eucharistic theology of Power. Community and the presence of Christ belong together. According to Power: “The Word gives itself delightfully in its own polysemy, allowing the promise of God’s kingdom to come about in different ways, as communities in their own experience of life find the meaning of their sacraments in these narratives.”<sup>1179</sup> Power emphasises the presence of Christ in the community. God’s kenotic gift is the source for koinonia.

With a broad approach to eucharistic theology Power makes room for a great variety and plurality of understanding. This makes it difficult to summarise his contributions and to gather his results in a conclusion. I find that Power certainly has reached his goal to rethink sacramental theology in both a foundational and radical way in highlighting the complexity of sacrament and its interpretation.

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<sup>1175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1176</sup> See *ibid.*, 155.

<sup>1177</sup> See *ibid.*, 153.

<sup>1178</sup> See *ibid.*, 154.

<sup>1179</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER SIX

### EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF RATZINGER, SCHILLEBEECKX, AND POWER IN THE LIGHT OF VATICAN II

#### Introduction

The aim of the study of the eucharistic theology of Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx and Power has not been to evaluate their contributions to eucharistic theology in general, but has been to show how their theology help to shed light on the specific question on the understanding of the interrelation of sacrifice, real presence and communion in recent Roman Catholic Theology. Their contributions are evaluated and put in the light of the contributions of magisterial Vatican and post-Vatican documents.

There has been a debate going on since the Council on how to interpret its results correctly. One discussion asks whether it is the text of the documents or the “spirit” of the Council that has a priority for interpretation. Another approach is the aspect of continuity and discontinuity. The question has also risen as to how the official post-conciliar Church documents are to be understood.

It has been pointed out that there have been conflicting versions of the Council between John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger.<sup>1180</sup> This has been expressed in a “dialogue” of interpretations where John Paul II’s positive view of the Council contrasted with Ratzinger’s pessimistic interpretations of the post-Vatican II period.<sup>1181</sup> Another comparison is made by Rowland: “In shorthand terms one can say that while *Gaudium et Spes* and *Dignitatis Humanae*

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<sup>1180</sup> See Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning*, 106.

<sup>1181</sup> *Ibid*; Cf. See Joseph Ratzinger and V. Messori, *The Ratzinger Report* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 36-37.

(the Declaration on religious Freedom)<sup>1182</sup> were the *Vatican II* documents closest to the heart and mind of John Paul II, for Benedict XVI they are *Lumen gentium*, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Dei Verbum*...<sup>1183</sup> John Paul II found in the 1985 Extraordinary Synod a means to influence the reception of Vatican II. According to Faggioli the final results of the Synod revealed a complexity in which there is a clear development *ad extra*, in social teaching, ecumenism, and in interreligious dialogue. On the other hand, the issues *ad intra* showed a more conservative approach.<sup>1184</sup> There was a development of this dynamic in gradual favour of the views of Ratzinger. When Ratzinger was elected pope in 2005 there was an end to this balancing and the interpretation of Benedict XVI came to dominate.<sup>1185</sup> With Benedict XVI's election the teaching of the Church took a new turn compared to that of John Paul II.<sup>1186</sup> This was no surprise as Ratzinger had already in 1985, in *The Ratzinger Report*, explained his view of a correct understanding of a conciliar hermeneutic reform that was in continuity with the tradition of the Church and another erroneous one that was characterised by discontinuity and rupture. There is no "pre-" or "post-" conciliar Church, Ratzinger holds, there is but one, unique Church that walks the path toward the Lord, ever deepening and ever better understanding the treasure of faith that he himself has entrusted to her."<sup>1187</sup> He emphasises that "in no way was it the intention of the pope who took the initiative for Vatican II, John XXIII, and of the pope who continued faithfully, Paul VI, to bring up for discussion a *depositum fidei* which was viewed by them as undisputed and already assured."<sup>1188</sup> Benedict XVI's views are consistent with his teaching as Ratzinger who emphasises that the way to understand Vatican II

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<sup>1182</sup> *Dignitatis Humanae* <[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651207\\_dignitatis-humanae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html)> [accessed 21 March 2012].

<sup>1183</sup> Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith*, 11.

<sup>1184</sup> See Faggioli, *Vatican II*, 86.

<sup>1185</sup> See *ibid.*, 106.

<sup>1186</sup> See *ibid.*, 95. "John Paul II had inaugurated a sort of Vatican II nominalism-a certain easiness in using the brand "Vatican II" for both new phenomena in the Church (like the Catholic movements) and the theological convictions of the last pope, who had been a member of the council. This theologically complex legacy of the twenty-seven-year pontificate was over."

<sup>1187</sup> See Ratzinger, *The Ratzinger Report*, 35.

<sup>1188</sup> See *ibid.*

is to read the *letter* of the documents because this will enable the discovering of their true *spirit*.<sup>1189</sup> This instruction was reemphasised by Benedict XVI in his speech on December 2005 addressed to the Roman Curia.<sup>1190</sup> This papal address initiated a new type of relationship between papal teaching and Vatican II for Benedict's pontificate.<sup>1191</sup>

Schillebeeckx's outlook on Vatican II was quite different from Ratzinger's. For Schillebeeckx the Council was a hope of the rediscovery of Christianity as an "event."<sup>1192</sup> The Council expressed for him a new self-awareness, a new belief in human beings, and a new relationship toward the modern world. Schillebeeckx writes: "The renewed self-awareness of the church and the new, human and Christian appraisal of the world demand that the church redefines its position toward the secularized world. To this new appraisal Schema 13 [*Gaudium et Spes*] must solemnly bear witness,"<sup>1193</sup> For Schillebeeckx a new theology was taking shape in Vatican II that was deliberately based on Scripture and the history of salvation, and on the contemporary situation to understand the Word of God for modern men and women. Schillebeeckx saw *Concilium*, the International Journal for Theology, of which he was a co-founder, as a means to the process to continue the work of Vatican II.<sup>1194</sup> It aimed to take a clear intercultural, ecumenical, and critical approach, which is found in the writings of Schillebeeckx. Renewal in the Church, he held, often begins with illegal deviations and he considers renewals from above rare and even sometimes dangerous.<sup>1195</sup> He was aware that some people criticise his views as being too one-sided and that he sees the Church in too "horizontal" a way and too much in accordance with the model of a social reality using sociological terms.<sup>1196</sup> Against this he argued that Vatican II maintains a too sacral view of the

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<sup>1189</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>1190</sup> See Faggioli, *Vatican II*, 110.

<sup>1191</sup> See *ibid.*, 95.

<sup>1192</sup> See Faggioli, *Vatican II*, 78.

<sup>1193</sup> *Ibid.*, see reference to Schillebeeckx, *The Real Achievement of Vatican II*, 24.

<sup>1194</sup> Faggioli, *Vatican II*, 51.

<sup>1195</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, 232; Schillebeeckx, *Ministry* 82-85.

<sup>1196</sup> See *ibid.*

priesthood, giving less attention to non-ministerial pastoral workers. This, he warns, is not a sound theology.<sup>1197</sup> The whole Church, writes Schillebeeckx, is the people of God led by a priestly hierarchy as “the sign raised among the nations.”<sup>1198</sup> The activity both of the faithful and their leaders is an ecclesial activity.<sup>1199</sup> His conclusion is that both the hierarchy and the believing people belong essentially to the primordial sacrament. He adds: “As the sacramental Christ, the Church too is mystically both head and members.”<sup>1200</sup> I find it important to note Depoortere’s interpretation that Schillebeeckx believed that Vatican II does not constitute a rupture, but a new way of thinking of the continuity and the Christian community.<sup>1201</sup>

As I have mentioned earlier Ratzinger blames much of what he sees as wrong with liturgical action since Vatican II on the use of sociological categories.<sup>1202</sup> According to him, too much attention is given to the human group in liturgical practice and he is afraid that the mystery of the Church might be obscured by this. This is not in line with Power’s opinion. Power finds that this discloses a very abstract notion of Church where the mystery waits to take flesh in celebration but nevertheless has a distinct form as Roman and hierarchical.<sup>1203</sup> Power writes: “Whenever he [Ratzinger] mentions Church, in the background there is the ordained priesthood and the authority of the See of Rome. These represent a kind of divine and Christological form, which is then to be bestowed on individual congregations, through the liturgy.”<sup>1204</sup> As Power rightly points out “insights into the human sciences do not substitute for theology but they give some perception of how the body of Christ takes on flesh and form in human cultures. The transmission of the Word of God, the government of the Church and ritual

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<sup>1197</sup> See *ibid.*, 233.

<sup>1198</sup> See *Christ the Sacrament*, 48.

<sup>1199</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1200</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1201</sup> See Frederiek Depoortere in Lieven Boeve, Frederiek Depoortere, and Stephan Van Erp, eds, *Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Theology*, eds, (New York: T&T Clark International, 2010), Preface, xxvi.

<sup>1202</sup> See Ratzinger: *A New Song to the Lord: Faith in Christ and Liturgy Today*, (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 111-127. See also Power, *Sacrament*, 29.

<sup>1203</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 30.

<sup>1204</sup> See *ibid.*

practice need to be understood in their inner-worldly forms.”<sup>1205</sup> This is one example of how Power keeps his theology to remain unified although he manages to adapt it to present time. The method he uses is always to maintain a dynamic and balanced theology thanks to his consistency of arguments and openness to different cultures.

How much was left open to interpret after the Council? Was it only the popes who were able to make a correct interpretation? These questions are interesting in the light of the action of Paul VI who, in order to end the debate on *Lumen Gentium* in 1964, gave his *Nota explicativa praevia* as a clarifying text for the interpretation of chapter three of *Lumen Gentium*, on the use of the term *collegium*. The text states that the Supreme Pastor of the Church can always exercise his power at will, as his very office demands. This is especially so as the College of which the pontiff is the head very seldom is “fully active” (active participation needs convocation by the pope)<sup>1206</sup> and thus there is not much of a collegial activity.<sup>1207</sup> I would also point to John Paul II’s revision and reinterpretation of the notion of the Church as a “people of God” which thus loses the importance it was given at the Council.<sup>1208</sup> Perhaps because of this, there has not been a development in the interpretation of the theology of the Church as the people of God. Instead, the symbol of the Church as the Sacrament of Christ has been emphasised.

As we have already seen, the great event of Vatican II was the new ecclesiology. Pottmeyer has pointed out the necessity of interpreting the relationship between the ecclesiology of Vatican I with its solemn approval of the papacy with the more collegial ecclesiology of Vatican II and of interpreting one in the light of the other.<sup>1209</sup> His opinion is that Vatican II as well as Vatican I was not able to complete its work. He sees Vatican II as a

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<sup>1205</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1206</sup> The parenthesis is my addition.

<sup>1207</sup> See no. 4 of *Nota Explicativa Praevia* at the end of *Lumen Gentium*.

<sup>1208</sup> See Faggioli, *Vatican II*, 87.

<sup>1209</sup> See *ibid.*, 98.

building site.<sup>1210</sup>

The intertextual dynamic of the council documents is important. As Faggioli, remarks and I agree with him, most historians and theologians have reached the conclusion that Vatican II is both a corpus of documents and an event.<sup>1211</sup> Thus it should be understood both in *letter* and *spirit*. I also agree with his suggestion that because of the recent polemics on the relationship between letter and spirit it is important to continue research on the reception of Vatican II in postconciliar theology.<sup>1212</sup> The final step of research that he suggests is to reach the history of each text's use in post-Vatican II theology.<sup>1213</sup>

***Style, Method, and Interpretive Framework in the Works of Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx, and Power.***

*Ratzinger*

Ratzinger's reputation has been varying. He has been praised for displaying "a linguistic mastery that fascinated and captivated people."<sup>1214</sup> His language has been said to be elegant, distinctive, precise, and his thought has even been compared with the music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to be generated as "one single stroke, as one coherent whole from his heart and intellect at the same time."<sup>1215</sup> His style is narrative and he does not avoid controversies. He frequently returns to and repeats ideas and concepts that he has used in earlier publications, although from a slightly other point of view. This may be problematic when he uses references to his earlier publications to state an idea instead of giving further arguments of his statement in the new situation. Ratzinger has endeavoured to keep an "ecclesial sense" and to preserve the

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<sup>1210</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Hermann J. Pottmeyer, *Towards a Papacy in Communion*, 110

<sup>1211</sup> See Faggioli, *Vatican II*, 125.

<sup>1212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1214</sup> De Gaál, *the theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, 45.

<sup>1215</sup> *Ibid.*



Church against the world, above all against the relativistic and postmodern approaches. This kind of “guarding” the faith is already obvious in his publications as the prefect of the CDF. An example is the Ratzinger/Kasper debate where he repeated his standpoint until he was convinced that he had to change it. His ecclesiology has been considered to foster “an exclusivistic mentality anew in the Church.”<sup>1216</sup> A gender-exclusive language may be seen in his books, especially the earlier once written in the sixties. In his later books on the Eucharist, his use of “we” makes it more difficult to evaluate his language in this respect.<sup>1217</sup>

As we have seen throughout the chapter on Ratzinger’s eucharistic theology, his teaching is on the whole consistent during his theological production, although there are some fluctuations in his teaching.<sup>1218</sup> During the years, his theology has become more argumentative and at times seen as provocative defending his positions.<sup>1219</sup> Ratzinger’s view is that he has not tried to create a system of his own. Instead, he aims to think in agreement with the faith of the Church not developing a theology that he draws out of himself.<sup>1220</sup> His conviction that he speaks the truth of the Church may partly explain his unwillingness to be flexible. Ratzinger holds that he always has tried to be in dialogue.<sup>1221</sup> However, he admits that at times he has expressed “harsh reactions” when in debate with theologians.

### *Schillebeeckx*

The concept of understanding is crucial for Schillebeeckx. He has studied the process of understanding and concluded that understanding is confined by many factors such as language, time, and space. Schillebeeckx studied the question of how it is possible for human beings to

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<sup>1216</sup> Ratzinger et al. *The Ratzinger Reader*, 87. See also Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007), Part 1, 3-40.

<sup>1217</sup> See for example Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith* and Ratzinger *God is Near Us*.

<sup>1218</sup> See Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth*, 115-117.

<sup>1219</sup> See Ratzinger et al, *The Ratzinger Reader*, 11.

<sup>1220</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>1221</sup> *Ibid.*, 94. Ratzinger gives an example of this, recounting the dialogue with Gustavo Gutiérrez on liberation theology.

know God. How is God revealed? Schillebeeckx made an active choice to avoid answering this question with dogmas because he wanted to offer “ordinary people”, i.e. non-theologians, the possibility to understand what he wants to teach. His method of research was to start from natural concrete experiences without using the revelation of God through Christ until when He already had established his point. In this way, he could point to “the continuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ proclaimed by the Church.”<sup>1222</sup>

Schillebeeckx tries to recognise the concrete encounter with Christ in sacramental activity. To explain this he adds a complementary approach of an interpersonal relationship. One of the most important contributions is the combination of experiences of negative contrast and praxis. Faith and action do not contradict each other, Schillebeeckx holds, but faith is the basis for the action.<sup>1223</sup> A responsibility, says Schillebeeckx, rests on human beings to make a response to God. This answer is encouraged by Schillebeeckx to have the form of a political liberation and is interpreted as grace by him.<sup>1224</sup> Schillebeeckx’s Christology is placed in the relation between the world and the Church. He has inspired people all over the world with his practical view on theology.

Robert Schreiter holds that Schillebeeckx has contributed in five areas: method, God, the human, the social, and suffering.<sup>1225</sup> Schillebeeckx writes in a gender-inclusive way and has openness for dialogue.<sup>1226</sup> His theology might be characterised as using discontinuity as continuity.<sup>1227</sup> He was continuously open to the new. This attitude is shown in his statement “I

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<sup>1222</sup> Erik Borgman, “Edward Schillebeeckx’s Reflections on the Sacraments and the Future of Catholic Theology” in Erik Borgman, Paul D. Murray, and Andrés Torres Queiruga eds in *Sacramentalizing human history: in honor of Edward Schillebeeckx (1914-2009)*, Concilium (2001 vol. 1), 15.

<sup>1223</sup> See Depoortere, “Preface” in Boeve et al., eds, *Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Theology*, xxiv on the opinions of Oliver Davies.

<sup>1224</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, *God is New Each Moment*, 104.

<sup>1225</sup> See Boeve et al., eds, *Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Theology*, xxvi.

<sup>1226</sup> See Schoof, ed. *The Schillebeeckx Case*. 46-49. See Schillebeeckx’s answers to the questions of the CDF, which express his willingness for openness and dialogue.

<sup>1227</sup> See Erik Borgman, “Retrieving God’s Contemporary Presence: The Future of Edward Schillebeeckx’s Theology of Culture” in *Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Theology*, 236.

am not writing for posterity.”<sup>1228</sup>

Werner Jeanrond describes Schillebeeckx’s Christology to be the result of using three separate and different methods.<sup>1229</sup> In *Jesus*, he uses a historico-critical method, in *Christ* a hermeneutical method, and in *Church* an ethical method. According to Jeanrond, it is only in the third case that he makes the connection that he wanted to establish between faith and tradition on the one hand and modern horizons on the other.

Lieven Boeve holds that Schillebeeckx’s theology has a duality between a “theo-ontological” or “creation-theological” and “an increasingly hermeneutical” way.<sup>1230</sup> With the years, Schillebeeckx becomes more aware of the importance of tradition “to discern God in the world and in history.”<sup>1231</sup> Boeve concludes that Schillebeeckx has been able to keep the two different aspects, creation faith and hermeneutics, together.<sup>1232</sup> He recommends the theology of the twenty-first century to take this direction.<sup>1233</sup>

### *Power*

Power’s theology has the characteristics of a post-modern approach. He wants a re-thinking of sacrifice in terms of images, signs, symbols, metaphor and events. He speaks of rupture of sacrament, event-eventing, sacramental excess and transgressing the symbolic code. Signs have to be open signs but in order to be open they lose their grip on the rituals that are to be “codified.” The interpretation agreed on by the faithful is thus important. For Power, the Eucharist is a language event. He highlights that the liturgy is a language event with many forms of language as ritual action, word proclaimed, and blessing prayer.<sup>1234</sup> Power explains that: “The three together constitute the language event, and insight into meaning and into what

<sup>1228</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *God is New Each Moment*, 123-129.

<sup>1229</sup> See Werner Jeanrond, *Gudstro: Teologiska Reflexioner II* (Lund: Arcus, 2001), 44-46.

<sup>1230</sup> See Depoortere in Boeve et al., eds, *Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Theology*, xx.

<sup>1231</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1232</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1233</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1234</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 76.

is done derives from seeing them in their intertextuality.”<sup>1235</sup>

God’s love is central. God, the totally different, the “Other,” looks at human beings with love. With the use of icon and idol Power is much in the same tradition as Jean-Luc Marion and Louis-Marie Chauvet.<sup>1236</sup> God’s love is expressed in Christ’s “self-giving.” God is an icon, he looks at men and women and they are invited to look back at him and give an answer. This dynamic is different from a construct of God as an idol. Sacraments are, says Power “The Language of God’s Giving.” Sacraments are actions, which also are called events by Power. The Liturgy is a language-action. However, there are problems with this approach. Werner Jeanrond holds when commenting an article by Power that overemphasising the sacramental action as a language event might reduce the sacramental action because sacramental actions include more than just a strong linguistic element.<sup>1237</sup> From his discussion on language event Power also moves to emphasising the body language and the ritual acts that are the same in different culture. Thus he seems also to take account the aspects which Jeanrond points highlighting the physical, bodily expression and emphasises the sacrament’s potential of rupture that “owes itself to an activity deeper or, if one prefers, larger than language.”<sup>1238</sup>

The line of development in Power’s work is interesting, he starts with the Priesthood, then comes Sacrifice, then Sacrament, after that the Eucharistic Mystery and then a reflection on the Divine Kenosis. The way he works, first considering the Eucharist as sacrifice and then ending in discussing it as gift, is interesting. It might reflect a movement of emphasis from the priest to the people, to end with the mystery of the self-gift of Christ. He moves from the aspects that deal with the celebration to the cause of the celebration, the gratuitous gift of God.

Power is opening up his theology continually during the years inviting different cultures and different Christian denominations. In speaking of the many names of God, he finds a

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<sup>1235</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1236</sup> See Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*.

<sup>1237</sup> See Werner Jeanrond, “Response to David N. Power” in *The Language of Sacramental Memorial*, 164

<sup>1238</sup> *Ibid.*

connection between Love and Justice in naming God. He holds it as essential to keep the naming open but also to let it be connected to present day problems.<sup>1239</sup>

***Complementarity and Difference in the Eucharistic Theology of Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx, and Power***

Complementarity may be a most valuable concept for a comparison between the eucharistic theology of the three theologians. As we have concluded earlier, the background, method, theology and style of the authors are different, and this contributes to their complementary teachings of eucharistic theology. This complementarity makes the grand contribution to contemporary eucharistic theology.

All the authors confirm that the Mass is a sacrifice. They all teach that the use of transubstantiation is a way of speaking of the sacramental presence of Christ. They also confirm that the eucharistic meal is the fulfillment of the one single action of the Mass. It is not the content of faith, which makes their teaching at times different or complementary. It is the way of approaching this great mystery. The Eucharist is a mystery of faith and there is no perfect and comprehensive way to explain its wealth. No single theologian can exhaust the meaning of the Eucharist. As I will demonstrate, Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx, and Power express the unity of faith and they do it with a diversity of explanations. Similarities are many and there are a few differences in understanding, but above all, each of the three theologians has his very special contribution.

As one would expect there is a great tension between the theology of Ratzinger and that of Schillebeeckx. Ratzinger contributes to theology from inside the hierarchy whereas Schillebeeckx does so in a way more independent of the dominant views of the hierarchy. Power starts from a post-Vatican situation and develops his eucharistic theology incorporating

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<sup>1239</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 90.

post-modern research methods.

The contributions of the three theologians to an assessment of the interrelationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion can be studied from different points of view. In this chapter, I want to use the light of Ratzinger's theology on sacrifice, the light of Schillebeeckx's studies on presence, and the light of Power's on communion. However, I will point to overlaps in their theology.

Before starting the analysis and evaluation, I want to underline that because the Eucharist is one single action, which includes sacrifice, real presence, and communion, a strict view from one aspect only without considering the whole relationship is impossible to accomplish. Thus, the answer to the question on sacrifice is connected also to real presence, the answer on real presence is related to gift, and communion is related both to gift and presence. I will not force the authors into categories but follow their main thoughts.

*1. How does Ratzinger contribute to the understanding of eucharistic sacrifice, and what are the contributions by Schillebeeckx and Power to this question?*

Ratzinger develops a normative ecclesiology of communion in his works. In his talk at the pastoral congress in Aversa in 2001, he held that the term communion “gathers all the essential intentions of Vatican II ecclesiology” and connects them with each other “in an appropriate fashion.”<sup>1240</sup> Among the reasons, why Ratzinger prefers to speak about communion is that it highlights the fact that the Eucharist is centred on the eucharistic sacrifice celebrated in a communion, the Church. The Eucharist is celebrated in different local communities and is universal at the same time because there is only one Christ and one single body of Christ that is offered. In the Eucharist Christ builds his body by giving himself anew through his risen Body, which unites the partakers to the triune God and to each other. The meaning and nature of

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<sup>1240</sup> See Ratzinger, *Conference of Cardinal Ratzinger at the opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa (Italy)*, 2001.

sacrifice is found in the structure of the Eucharist, which is a re-presentation of the sacrifice of Christ and his resurrection, thus connecting the past, the present and the future.

Through the expiation of sin - which signifies a process of reparation that avoids punishment - God's action of love, giving his only Son as a sacrifice, heals the broken bond between humans and God.<sup>1241</sup> This *exitus* of God gives, according to Ratzinger, the possibility for human beings to answer with a *reditus*. Ratzinger explains that the free will of human beings makes it possible for men and women to accept the gift of Jesus Christ and give themselves to him as an answer to his love. Ratzinger claims that the Old Testament sacrifices point to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.<sup>1242</sup> Because he gave his life as a gift and a sacrifice when he instituted the Eucharist, Ratzinger holds, is possible for human beings to be drawn into the life of the Triune God and to answer in giving a *reditus*, a return of God's love.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is related to the sacrifice of the Mass. Because there is a unicity of the sacrifice of Christ, there is just one sacrifice of Christ. This makes the Eucharistic sacrifice a real sacrifice. How does the Church offer this one sacrifice? Ratzinger gives the answer stating that the Eucharistic canon is an offering in verbal form.<sup>1243</sup> The resurrection of Christ gives the authority to the words of institution when Christ is using the words of the priest. The reason for this is that Christ identifies with the human being, Christ died alone, but he did not rise alone, since the resurrection he never stands alone but is *caput et corpus*, head and body, open to all.<sup>1244</sup> The priest when pronouncing the words of institution acts *in persona Christi* and that means that the worship of Christ becomes the worship of humans. The true sacrifice is the word of the Word "in it speaks the one who, as Word is life."<sup>1245</sup>

The Eucharist is emphasised as being dependent on the validity of the ordination of

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<sup>1241</sup> See Denzinger, *De cultu et veneratione*, 1543; *De satisfactionis*, 1690 and 1692.

<sup>1242</sup> See de Gaál, *The Theology*, 242.

<sup>1243</sup> See *ibid.*, 52.

<sup>1244</sup> See Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us*, 50.

<sup>1245</sup> See *ibid.*, 51.

priests in communion with Rome. Ratzinger always refers to the unity of the Church coming from inside the universal Church. His argumentation may appear circular - the Church gives the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church that makes the Eucharist, which I find is true but might lead to a more narrow perspective of the life of the Church and may block development in the understanding of the Church. Ratzinger prefers seeing the Church as a sacrament and not so much as the people of God.

Schillebeeckx underscores the experience of suffering. Based on the doctrine of redemption in Thomism he speaks of the *exitus* and *reditus* in a way similar to that of Ratzinger. However, his emphasis is on the descent of God as Christ offering sanctification, and in the return of the gift as the perfect response of Christ as the primordial sacrament.<sup>1246</sup> Schillebeeckx has a theology of the cross in which he emphasises obedience.<sup>1247</sup> He interprets the surrender as distillation and purification.<sup>1248</sup> It is mainly the sacrifice of Christ as a historical person that Schillebeeckx treats not so much the sacrifice of the Mass as a sacrifice.

David Power has another approach to the sacrifice. He describes the Eucharist as the memorial of the Pasch of Christ and it is in the blessing prayer that Power finds a hermeneutical key. Power finds the expression of the fullness of divine love in the sacramental blessings. In these, there is a threefold invocation of God related to a threefold aspect of the mystery of revelation. He mentions the invocation of God the creator, the invocation of the God of the covenant, and the invocation of God as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, made known to the world in the self-emptying of Christ on the cross. Power explains that the key to the invocations that take place in these kinds of invocations "is always found in the remembrance of the Cross of Jesus Christ."<sup>1249</sup> I hold that Power in his interpretation of this threefold

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<sup>1246</sup> Lambert J. Leijssen, *With the Silent Glimmer of God's Spirit: A Postmodern Look at the Sacraments*, trans. Marie Baird (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 10.

<sup>1247</sup> Kathleen McManus, "Reconciling the cross in the Theologies of Edward Schillebeeckx and Ivone Gebara," *Theological Studies* 66, no. 3 (2005).

<sup>1248</sup> Schillebeeckx, "Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments," 24-25.

<sup>1249</sup> See Power, *Sacrament*, 77.



invocation finds a centrality in the sacrifice of the Cross in the Eucharistic prayer. However, he sees the Eucharist as a whole and in this, it is the communion that is central for him.

Power explains that the term sacrifice needs to be demythologised. He further holds, as we have seen that also Ratzinger does, that there is a connection between the Eucharist and the thanksgiving sacrifice of *todah*. This kind of praise was how Christ's disciples lived when presenting their bodies as acceptable sacrifice and true worship. Power also refers to the research done by Cesare Giraudo.<sup>1250</sup> It seems to be confirmed that the Old Testament temple sacrifices later were separated and that the *todah* became a primary means to give a spiritual offering, a "sacrifice of praise."<sup>1251</sup> This could be seen as the perfect form of sacrifice. Power concludes: "It may well be therefore in this sense that the Christian Eucharist came to be called a sacrifice of thanksgiving."<sup>1252</sup>

## 2. *How does Schillebeeckx contribute to the understanding of real presence and presence of God in the world, and how do Ratzinger and Power contribute?*

Schillebeeckx treats the eucharistic presence already in his early work "The Eucharist," in German named as *Die Eucharistische Gegenwart*. Schillebeeckx treats this mystery in full following the teaching of Thomas Aquinas. However, at this point of comparison between the authors I chose to present his later theology.

In 2000, Schillebeeckx published an article with the title *Naar een herontdekking van de christelijke sakramenten: ritualisering van religieuze momenten in het alledaagsw leven*, which describes his thinking on ritual studies. The way he points to is "Towards a Rediscovery of the Christian Sacraments: Ritualizing Religious Elements in Daily Live."<sup>1253</sup> From this, he gives a

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<sup>1250</sup> Cesare Giraudo, *La struttura letteraria della preghiera eucaristica: Saggio sulla genesi letteraria di una forma* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981).

<sup>1251</sup> Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 56.

<sup>1252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1253</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, "Naar een herontdekking van de christelijke sakramenten: ritualisering van religieuze momenten in het alledaagsw leven" in *Tijdschrift voor theologie* 40 (164-187). This article is published

new perspective in which it is possible to reinterpret his earlier writings. It is in his postscript to the concept ‘performance,’ that his new project becomes most clear. It sums up his treatment of the Christian sacraments as an encounter with God in a special way. The point of departure for Schillebeeckx is his anthropological view. Based on the two concepts *legomenon* (word) and *drómedon* (gesture) he explains how these both components jointly constitute the ritual of the sacraments. He leaves the earlier explanation with matter and form behind for a more dynamic approach. It is in acting the sacramental ritual that the ordinary life, which the ordinary actions are “interrupted.” The ritual is a praising that God really is present in a new way since his resurrection and ascension through his Holy Spirit. The “active signification with its performative efficacy is operative at the anthropological level of a genuine liturgical performance.”<sup>1254</sup> Furthermore, Schillebeeckx holds that the performative signification of “the religious ritual as a whole is sufficient; anthropologically the sacraments have no need whatever of a supplementary instrumental cause transcending the efficacious ritual of the Christian faith.”<sup>1255</sup> Schillebeeckx calls the performance an event, which at the same time is both “trans-rationally” an operation coming from God, and a going upwards from below i.e. from the people.<sup>1256</sup> It is one and the same *opus operatum* (the objective side of the sacrament). Both the ecclesiastic and the personal faith of the Christian participants are embedded in the “ritual performance” itself.<sup>1257</sup> The mutual relationship between the Christians and God is important although God’s gift always is free. The double reciprocal movements represent an encounter with a person, Christ, who is waiting for an answer, an agreement. Christ makes “dialogue, contact and communication possible.”<sup>1258</sup> Schillebeeckx builds his discussion of the

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in slightly different form in German. Edward Schillebeeckx, “Hin zu einer Wiederentdeckung der christlichen Sakramente. Ritualisierung religiöser Momente in alltäglichen Leben” in *Interdisziplinäre Ethik: Grundlagen, Methoden, Bereiche: Festgabe für Mieth zum sechziger Geburtstag Studien zur theologischen Ethik*, 89 (309-339).

<sup>1254</sup> Schillebeeckx, *Towards a Rediscovery*, 27.

<sup>1255</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>1256</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>1257</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1258</sup> See Leijssen, *With the Silent Glimmer of God’s Spirit*, 10.

sacramental encounter with God on the teaching of Thomas Aquinas that *sacramentum est in genere signum*. It is through the sacraments that Christ remains present in the Church. The concrete situation is important. It is in this world that the meeting with God takes place, through ritual and through the meeting with other human beings. As Schillebeeckx puts it, “ritual has to do with the need to communicate.”<sup>1259</sup> The use of the word performance is adequate because it implies the human body. Schillebeeckx remarks that in some cultures there is no distinction between rites and drama.<sup>1260</sup> Grace is just one *Single Christian religious event*. In this light, it is easy to understand that Schillebeeckx puts emphasis on the roles of everyone at the liturgy. The sacraments are not understood as objects but as a participation in which all participants have an active role. “In God’s assembled congregation various liturgical roles, including that of the officiant, are assigned- each with its own place and capacity, without mystification of any particular role.”<sup>1261</sup>

As we have seen, the most characteristic trait of Schillebeeckx’s writings on the Eucharist is his Christology highlighting the interpretation of Christ as the encounter with God. Schillebeeckx does not use the faith as the basis for describing the salvation history of Jesus but grounds his theology in historical and exegetical research. It seems that Schillebeeckx looks for God in history without turning to the teaching of the Church. This method is well described by Schillebeeckx and must not be misinterpreted as if he is denying the resurrection faith in the Church. Instead, with his method he aims at explaining the indissoluble connection between the objective historical appearance of Jesus and his Church.<sup>1262</sup>

Schillebeeckx claims that his theology often has been misunderstood and this, he holds, is

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<sup>1259</sup> Schillebeeckx, *Towards a Rediscovery*, 13.

<sup>1260</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>1261</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>1262</sup> Schoof, ed. *The Schillebeeckx Case*, 49.

certainly true of his notion *extra mundum nulla salus*.<sup>1263</sup> He explains this famous phrase “*extra mundum nulla salus*” in a letter of introduction at a symposium to his honour in 2008. In this he holds that his phrase has been misunderstood when it has been interpreted as referring to humanism and not to salvation from God. The accent must be put on *salus* and not on *mundum*; if this is not done it cannot be correctly understood.<sup>1264</sup> Schreiter clarifies that “*salus* suffuses the *mundum*.”<sup>1265</sup> *Salus*, Schillebeeckx remarks, *always* comes from God but is mediated by human beings. The “*extra mundum nulla salus*” (there is no salvation outside the world) is according to Schillebeeckx an aid to understanding the Trinity. Christ the resurrected One is present in our neighbours and this is the reason why “God can be encountered everywhere in creation.” For Schillebeeckx, is God eternal and each moment new, and his saving presence is mediated through human beings.<sup>1266</sup> This, Schillebeeckx points out, makes it important to “retrieve the place where we are established as ‘holy ground’ (Ex 3:5).”<sup>1267</sup>

Schillebeeckx places a great emphasis on the real presence both in the Eucharist and in the faithful.<sup>1268</sup> In this understanding, Schillebeeckx is far from that of Aquinas and cannot be said to treat the presence as a thing, but on the other hand, Christ’s real presence becomes dependent on the community for its fullest implementation.<sup>1269</sup> In the commemorative meal, bread and wine becomes the subject of a new meaning. This new meaning presupposes the presence of the Lord in the Church, in the assembled community and in the one who officiates in the Eucharist. At the transubstantiation the presence is the giver himself given to the people.

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<sup>1263</sup> See “Letter from Edward Schillebeeckx to the Participants in the Symposium ‘Theology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Enduring Relevance of Edward Schillebeeckx for Contemporary Theology’ (Leuven 3-6 December 2008)” in Boeve et al, eds, *Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Theology*, xiv-xv.

<sup>1264</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1265</sup> See Schreiter, “Schillebeeckx and Theology in the Twenty-first Century” in *Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Theology* 253-255.

<sup>1266</sup> See Schillebeeckx, “Letter from Schillebeeckx” in Boeve et al., eds, *Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Theology*, xiv.

<sup>1267</sup> See Depoortere, “Preface”, in *ibid.*, xxvi.

<sup>1268</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, 212-214.

<sup>1269</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 114; 116-117 where Schillebeeckx seems to agree with Charles Davis’ view.

There is reciprocity of this “real presence.”<sup>1270</sup> Schillebeeckx regards the Church to be the community of salvation and she cannot be separated from Christ, so if Christ makes himself present in the Eucharist, the Church also makes herself present at the same time. The presence of both Christ and his community is meaningfully expressed in the eucharistic sign as a common surrender to the Father. There is one bread and thus one body and the sacramental presence of Christ is the foundation of the Church. Schillebeeckx explains that the “body of the Lord” in the Christological sense is the “body of the Lord” in the ecclesiological sense, and together they make the “eucharistic body” which is a reciprocity of real presence.<sup>1271</sup> This interpretation puts much emphasis on the community.

Power speaks of sacramental abundance. For him the divine kenosis is a love without calculation. The theology of the Church is, according to David Power, a continuation of a Christology that weaves together the sending of the Son and the sending of the Spirit. It is in the Church, Christ’s body in the Spirit, that the triune and creator God makes tangible a divine presence.<sup>1272</sup> In this the Christians see a connection between the kenosis of the Son making the Trinity manifest and the way of kenosis that is the way for the Church to follow “through evangelical poverty in all forms that this may take.”<sup>1273</sup> This dynamic way of interpreting the Church is, I believe, the framework from which Power understands the presence of Christ in the Church. For Power, there is always an interplay between pluriform expression of the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist, God’s great sacrament of love and an ethical implication in the historical and cultural concreteness of human experience.<sup>1274</sup> He promotes eucharistic justice, always caring for the last person, the one who is marginalised, but does not exclude the others.<sup>1275</sup>

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<sup>1270</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, 213.

<sup>1271</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1272</sup> See Power, *Love Without Calculation*, 83.

<sup>1273</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1274</sup> Power, *Sacrament*, 86.

<sup>1275</sup> See Power, “Eucharistic Justice,” *Theological Studies* 68 (2006): 856-879, 856.

The eschatological orientation of the Eucharist is fundamental both to understand the eucharistic tradition and to develop forms of the Eucharist that are contextually appropriate.<sup>1276</sup> He holds that it is important to ask the question “with whom does Christ align himself in the kenosis that we remember as sacrifice?”<sup>1277</sup> With this in mind, he suggests an eschatological hermeneutics of the sacraments that brings hope to Christian disciples. “The eschatological orientation of the Eucharist, the commitment to justice that it is intended to evoke, offers possibility of ongoing liturgical renewal within living communities of faith.”<sup>1278</sup> Power finds the ethical always to be a factor in keeping memorial. “The event remembered is present not only in the sacraments, but in the Christian people, in the life of the discipleship, in the action and suffering for justice’s sake, to which the remembered event moves participants.”<sup>1279</sup>

### *3. How does Power contribute to the understanding of communion, and how do Ratzinger and Schillebeeckx contribute?*

David Power’s theological production on eucharistic theology started after the Second Vatican Council. Power has a high view of the power of language in celebrating the sacramental memorial of the cross. He affirms that it is the language that brings reality into being.<sup>1280</sup> His discussions of rupture, excess and abundance as aspects of the language of sacramental memorial are important notions.

For Power, there is always an intimate connection between sacrament as event and sacrament as gift. He finds a dual nature of sacramental language in which both *poesis* and *praxis* are important. With *poetic* Power wants to emphasise, not only the customary use of poem, but also to underline the quality of expression and *poetics* is thus the effort to uncover

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<sup>1276</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1277</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1278</sup> *Ibid.*, 879.

<sup>1279</sup> See, *Sacrament*, 177.

<sup>1280</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 305.

it.<sup>1281</sup> The liturgy as language event takes into account the power of language as well as the Christ-like action that is supposed to develop in the community celebrating the liturgy. Power underscores the importance of attentiveness to what is offered in word and rite, the forms of its expression, and what emerges through these forms. He maintains “the reality of God, of God who through love enters into human facticity, into human events, into human time” communicates itself in rituals.<sup>1282</sup>

The gift of God brings human beings “beyond, even out of, their limited temporality, with a promise for the future” and “it can be appropriated into the lives of peoples in other times, places, cultures.”<sup>1283</sup> The way the community responds to the reality of God has relevance for the praxis of Christ-like actions. The Christian community that is the body of Christ is engaged ethically. The gift from the Father, the twofold mission of Word and Spirit given in sacramental form in the memorial of Christ’s death and in the gift of the Spirit which works from within the Church, make it possible, writes Power, “to take this memorial into the actuality of Christian community.”<sup>1284</sup>

“The Eucharist is an economy of gift, where the gift is from God, of and through Christ and the Spirit, and the communion table is the central role, not the consecration nor any gift made by the Church to God.”<sup>1285</sup> In this Power seems to take a different stance compared to Ratzinger. The appropriation of gift, says Power, can be a problem because the interplay between praise, thanksgiving and doxology seems to provoke entering reception of the gift from God into an economy of returning gift.<sup>1286</sup>

Power states that communion is central in the Eucharist. He writes: “All the words and rites of celebration lead however to the still moment of communion, when at last the gift of

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<sup>1281</sup> See *ibid.*, 72.

<sup>1282</sup> See *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>1283</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1284</sup> See *ibid.*, 85

<sup>1285</sup> See *ibid.*, 85-86.

<sup>1286</sup> See *ibid.*, 86.

Christ's body and blood the invitation to contemplation is heard and accepted<sup>1287</sup> This, however, does not need to mean that the sacrifice is not central as there is no opposition between this and the taking part in the meal that Christ prepared through his sacrifice. Power seems to emphasise the sacrifice on the cross and Christ's self-surrender and not so much the sacrifice of the Mass. As Jeanrond has argued, Power tends to emphasise the death of Christ in isolation from his resurrection.<sup>1288</sup>

Ratzinger holds that the Eucharist is the place for community to grow in communion. The communion is between the partakers, between the living Church and the communion with the deceased members of the community, between God and man, and between the persons within the Trinity of God. The Eucharist is communion of love.

The Eucharist is a meal in which Christ becomes truly present in the Eucharist. It is the way in which Christ can take hold of the person to take the step from the "we" in the Church to the "I" in the meeting with Christ, at the same time God and Man, and a person can thus abandon him/herself to Christ. There is an inner aspect, which makes a person capable of receiving the Eucharistic presence and this aspect is conscience.<sup>1289</sup> That is why there always has to be a contrite heart in order to receive the Lord in a worthy manner. Ratzinger emphasizes that no one can receive communion without first adoring. Obedience to one's conscience makes possible the Christian's participation in the "royal priesthood of Christ."<sup>1290</sup>

The praxis of faith is highlighted in Schillebeeckx's eucharistic theology. This is similar to the teaching of Power. Schillebeeckx finds a tight connection between eucharistic celebration and praxis. Schillebeeckx underlines that the "result" of eucharistic communion ought to be a dialogue between modern secular culture and society.<sup>1291</sup> He reminds us that the

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<sup>1287</sup> See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 349.

<sup>1288</sup> Werner Jeanrond "Response to D .N. Power" in Boeve and Leijssen, eds, *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 165.

<sup>1289</sup> See *ibid.*, 105.

<sup>1290</sup> See *ibid.*, 83.

<sup>1291</sup> Cf. Susan A. Ross "Church and Sacraments" in *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, eds, Hilbert and Schreiter,



consequence of the Eucharist is a close communion with Christ among the partakers and all other men and women. This is love, usually defined as *caritas*. This understanding is commonly held, but Schillebeeckx uses an argumentation where the concepts of praxis and *orthopraxis* are highlighted and stressed to emphasise the outer aspect of the Christian life, especially the social and political aspects.

### ***Conclusion***

The study of the different theologians in the light of Vatican II has been rewarding. Each of them has contributed in a high degree. However, it is by looking at the combined results that I find the future in eucharistic theology. Joseph Ratzinger's normative ecclesiology of communion gives a firm ground and the post-modern outlook opens up new ways for the future. A good example of this is the outline of Edward Schillebeeckx on liturgical studies. His thoughts of liturgy as the eucharistic celebration being an interruption really give a remembrance of God's care for human beings here and now. This is what Christ wanted to, to be remembered when human beings celebrate the Eucharist in his remembrance until he comes. This points to the eschatological hope, the time when God's kingdom will be opened up in full to human beings. Until then it is here and now in celebrating the Eucharist that God interrupts human life giving glimpses of the kingdom. Schillebeeckx's approach using the concept of performance indicates the possibility for everyone to take part in the celebration of the Eucharist in an interaction that enriches the one single action of thanksgiving to the Lord. In addition, David Power emphasises the Eucharist as an action, an event of the sacrifice of Christ as a gift of love without calculation, an abundance of love.

The reciprocity of *exitus* and *reditus* might be a good way to sum up all the contributions of Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx and Power because communication with God is what the Eucharist is

all about.

***The Centrality of the Sacrifice in the Eucharistic Action in Magisterial Vatican II and Post-Vatican II Documents***

The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is, according for me, the key document to understanding Vatican II's teaching on the Eucharist. It presents a close and organic bond between the renewal of the liturgy and the revitalisation of the whole life of the Church.<sup>1292</sup> It points to the wish of the triune God that all human beings be saved.<sup>1293</sup> The Paschal Mystery is central to the sacrificial view of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. It is principally through the Paschal Mystery of Christ's passion, resurrection from the dead, and the glorious ascension that Christ restored the life of human beings.<sup>1294</sup> This sacrifice is celebrated in the community of the Church since Pentecost.<sup>1295</sup> The Constitution holds that in the liturgy "the work of our redemption is accomplished, most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church."<sup>1296</sup> The Constitution connects the self-giving death of Christ and the Eucharist: "it was from the side of Christ that the Eucharist came forth."<sup>1297</sup>

Christ is always present in the sacrifice of the Mass, and especially under the Eucharistic species.<sup>1298</sup> Christ who in his redemptive action offered himself is "now the same offering, through his priest".<sup>1299</sup> He always associates himself with the Church.<sup>1300</sup> The Constitution clarifies this further by stating that: "the Church is the beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and

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<sup>1292</sup> See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1; 2.

<sup>1293</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>1294</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1295</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>1296</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>1297</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>1298</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>1299</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1300</sup> *Ibid.*

through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father.<sup>1301</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* holds that “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed” and is “at the same time the font from which all her power flows.”<sup>1302</sup> Celebrating the Eucharist is renewing the covenant between the Lord and human beings.<sup>1303</sup> By sharing in the sacrifice and eating the Lord’s Supper the faithful are drawn into the love of Christ and set on fire.<sup>1304</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* reminds the faithful that this means partaking in the passion of Christ. It explains that the dying of Jesus may be made manifest in the bodies of the faithful. This is why the faithful ask the Lord in the sacrifice of the Mass that, “‘receiving the offering of the spiritual victim,’ he may fashion us for himself as an eternal gift.”<sup>1305</sup>

The Eucharist is always a mystery of faith.<sup>1306</sup> When Christ at the Last Supper instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood this was “in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again.”<sup>1307</sup> The Constitution has an eschatological perspective. With this sacrifice, a “pledge of future glory” is given to all the faithful.<sup>1308</sup> The faithful are instructed to “give thanks God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him.”<sup>1309</sup> Further, “they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.”<sup>1310</sup>

Both the offering and the presence of Christ is discussed in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. However, the sacrifice of the Eucharist, which is a participation in the redeeming work of the sacrifice of Christ, is highlighted. It is by way of association with Christ that the Church

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<sup>1301</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1302</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>1303</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1304</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1305</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. Cf. 1 *Thess.* 5:17; 2 *Cor.* 4:10-11.

<sup>1306</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium.*, 48.

<sup>1307</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>1308</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1309</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1310</sup> *Ibid.* See also the reference given in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* note 38 to. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, book XI, chap. XI-XII: Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 74, 557-564.

performs the sacrifice of the Mass.

The first of the post-Vatican II documents on the Eucharist, the Encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* by Paul VI, has sometimes been criticised for describing the Eucharist in too cultic a way. However, this encyclical has also been said to be balanced and a bridge to the following the post-Vatican II eucharistic theology. It insists on the Eucharist as the offering of the Church and on the active participation of the faithful in the eucharistic mystery. Its teaching reaffirms Vatican II's teaching on the Eucharist, which in its turn is based on that of Trent. Paul VI emphasises the presence of Christ in the consecrated host.<sup>1311</sup> By doing this, he also emphasises the sacrifice of the Mass that is performed by the consecration.

Active participation by the lay faithful is important, the encyclical holds. This participation is connected to the offering. The faithful are exhorted to take part with faith and utmost devotion and in celebration of this "Most Holy Mystery, to offer it to God along with the priest as a sacrifice for their own salvation and that of the whole world, and to use it as spiritual nourishment."<sup>1312</sup> He confirms that: "the whole Church plays the role of priest and victim along with Christ, offering the Sacrifice of the Mass and itself completely offered in it."<sup>1313</sup> My interpretation is that there is no doubt that the Eucharistic sacrifice is central in the teaching of Paul VI.

*Mysterium Fidei* also speaks of communion, highlighting the relation between sacrifice and communion. It states: "The sacrifice belongs to the essence of the Eucharist, and the sacrament is the partaking in the sacrifice through communion."<sup>1314</sup> Paul VI points out that it is the re-enactment of the sacrifice of the Cross that is the core of the eucharistic doctrine.<sup>1315</sup>

It is at the consecration that Christ becomes present immolated in an unbloody way, applies his

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<sup>1311</sup> *Mysterium Fidei*, 11.

<sup>1312</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>1313</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>1314</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>1315</sup> *Mysterium Fidei*, 27.

salvific power and becomes spiritual food for communion.<sup>1316</sup> The relationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion thus depends on the initial sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and its re-presentation in the eucharistic sacrifice. Paul VI also connects celebrating the Eucharist with “social love.”<sup>1317</sup> The faithful are asked to put the common good ahead of private good and extend their charity to the parish, the universal Church and to the whole world because “there are members of Christ everywhere.”<sup>1318</sup> The result of performing the sacrifice along with Christ need to take deep root in the faithful, giving them an earnest desire for a total and generous offering of themselves to the service of the Divine Majesty.

*Mysterium Fidei* seems to confirm my conclusion from the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that participating in the redeeming work by way of the eucharistic sacrifice is central in the life of the faithful. It explains that the Eucharistic liturgy is sacrifice and sacrament. The sacrifice always precedes the sacrament and, in contrast to sacrament, helps the whole world. The sacrament gives fruits mainly to the persons communicating and is mandatory only for the priest.

The instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, also from Paul VI’s pontificate aims at clarifying the teachings of the Eucharist by way of repeating and summarizing much of the teaching of Vatican II and the preceding acts of the magisterium. The principal point of the recent documents of the Church is that the Mass at the same time and inseparably is a “sacrifice in which the Sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated,” and “a memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord”, and a sacred banquet of the Paschal sacrifice.”<sup>1319</sup> The instruction thus emphasises the importance of keeping together these teachings and interpreting them as an ensemble.<sup>1320</sup> In emphasizing adoration of Christ in the species, it states that: “When the faithful adore Christ present in the sacrament, they should remember that this presence derives

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<sup>1316</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1317</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>1318</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1319</sup> *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 3a.

<sup>1320</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

from the sacrifice and has as its purpose both sacramental and spiritual communion.”<sup>1321</sup>

The Church “performs together with Christ the role of priest and victim.”<sup>1322</sup> In the sacrifice of the Mass, the Lord “is immolated when ‘he begins to be present sacramentally as the spiritual food of the faithful under the appearances of bread and wine.’”<sup>1323</sup> The Church offers Christ to the Father and offers herself at the same time as a complete offering of herself together with him.<sup>1324</sup> The instruction emphasises that: “Participation in the Lord’s Supper is always communion with Christ offering Himself for us as a sacrifice to the Father.”<sup>1325</sup> The instruction explains that the Communion completes the sacrifice and encourages the lay faithful to receive it. It says: “the faithful participate more fully in this sacrament of thanksgiving, propitiation, petition, and praise, not only when they wholeheartedly offer the Sacred Victim, and in it themselves, to the Father with the priest, but also when they receive the same Victim sacramentally.”<sup>1326</sup> The instruction is very clear when it states that the sacrifice is, like the passion of Christ, offered for all but “has no effect except in those united to the passion of Christ by faith and charity... To these it brings a greater or less benefit in proportion to their devotion.”<sup>1327</sup> According to me, the iterations of the importance of the sacrifice points to its centrality in the one single act of the Eucharist. This is also confirmed by the fact that the species derive from the Mass and the communion of the reserved species is a union with “Christ and His sacrifice celebrated in the Mass.”<sup>1328</sup>

The Letter *Dominicae Cena*e of John Paul II was written to the bishops of the Church and is centred on Eucharist and Priesthood. The priesthood came into being at the moment of the

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<sup>1321</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>1322</sup> *Ibid.*, 3c.

<sup>1323</sup> *Ibid.*, 3b.

<sup>1324</sup> *Ibid.*, 3c.

<sup>1325</sup> *Ibid.*, 3b.

<sup>1326</sup> *Ibid.*, 3e.

<sup>1327</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>1328</sup> *Ibid.*, 3e

institution of the Eucharist.<sup>1329</sup> The eucharistic worship then connect the ministerial priesthood to the common priesthood by the fact that the Church was founded at the institution “as the new community of the People of God.”<sup>1330</sup> John Paul II repeats *Sacrosanctum Concilium* when he emphasises that the Eucharist is above all a sacrifice.<sup>1331</sup> He adds that it is the sacrifice of Redemption and the sacrifice of the New Covenant.<sup>1332</sup> John Paul II confirms that all who participate with faith in the Eucharist “become aware that it is a ‘sacrifice’, that is to say, a ‘consecrated Offering.’”<sup>1333</sup> The consecration re-presents Christ’s bloody sacrifice in an unbloody manner the proprietary sacrifice offered by Christ on the cross.<sup>1334</sup> This consecration opens the hearts of the faithful, so that, “purified by the mystery of the Redemption, they may be united to Him in Eucharistic Communion, which confers upon participation at Mass a value that is mature, complete and binding to human life.”<sup>1335</sup> The Communion is “the school of the cross.”<sup>1336</sup>

The Letter to the Bishop of the Church underscores the importance of the service of the priests, and puts the sacrifice they perform in the memory of Christ at the centre of their lives. In this text, it seems that the sacrifice is highlighted and central but is in close relationship to the Communion.

The encyclical of John Paul II *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* already presents its core when it starts with the words *Ecclesia de Eucharistia vivit*, the Church lives from the Eucharist.<sup>1337</sup> John Paul II connects the sacrifice of the Eucharist firmly to that of the ministerial office. The power to consecrate comes from Christ when he instituted the Eucharist.<sup>1338</sup> Paul II also

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<sup>1329</sup> *Dominicae Cena*, 2.

<sup>1330</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>1331</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1332</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1333</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1334</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1335</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1336</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>1337</sup> *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 1.

<sup>1338</sup> *Ibid.*, 5; 31.

emphasized the cosmic character of the Mass. “He, the Eternal High Priest who by the blood of his Cross entered the eternal sanctuary, thus gives back to the Creator and Father all creation redeemed. He does so through the priestly ministry of the Church, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity.”<sup>1339</sup> The encyclical repeats that the Church constantly lives from the redeeming sacrifice, which she approaches “not only through a faith-filled remembrance, but also through a real contact, since *this sacrifice is made present ever anew*, sacramentally perpetuated, in every community which offers it at the hands of the consecrated minister.”<sup>1340</sup> The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*.<sup>1341</sup> The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice in the strict sense.<sup>1342</sup> The Eucharist makes present not only Christ’s passion and death, but also his resurrection.<sup>1343</sup> It is because of his resurrection that Christ can become the “bread of life” in the Eucharist.<sup>1344</sup> The sacrifice of the Eucharist is intrinsically directed to the inward union of the faithful with Christ through Communion.<sup>1345</sup> The sacrament of the Eucharist is central because it brings the redemption present as salvation through the sacrifice completed in Communion. The worship of the Eucharist outside the Mass is strictly linked to the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>1346</sup>

The sacrifice of the Eucharist is offered in persona Christi, and makes thus a specific identification, which allows the Church to respond by joining in the thanksgiving offering directed to the Father.<sup>1347</sup> It is the fact that it is Christ’s sacrifice that makes it acceptable to the Father. Every community offers the sacrifice through the hands of the consecrated minister.<sup>1348</sup> “The offering is a joining in the offering ”by virtue of the royal priesthood.”<sup>1349</sup> In celebrating

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<sup>1339</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>1340</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>1341</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1342</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>1343</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>1344</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1345</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>1346</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>1347</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>1348</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>1349</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.



the sacrifice, the Church on earth is united to the heavenly “liturgy” and becomes part of it.<sup>1350</sup> This communion includes the whole Church, both on earth and in heaven, and the effect of this reaches out into the world.

As we now have seen, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* integrates many aspects of the Church and the Eucharist by explaining how the Church is eucharistic. It is consistent with Vatican II, but was promulgated in 2003, when the awareness of the Eucharist as a sacrifice was at times not well understood. This resulted in that the eucharistic liturgy was sometimes celebrated in a way only emphasising a fraternal banquet, thus depriving it of its sacrificial meaning. The Encyclical underscores that the sacramental presence is objectively present at the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice and is directed to the sacramental spiritual communion received in faith. In this way the text intergrades sacrifice, real presence, and Communion.

*Mane Nobiscum Domine* speaks about the Eucharist as a mystery of light.<sup>1351</sup> It is interesting to see John Paul II’s emphasis on the Eucharist is a meal. “There is no doubt that the most evident dimension of the Eucharist is that it is a *meal*.”<sup>1352</sup> He reminds the faithful that the Eucharist was instituted in the setting of the Passover meal. He underscores the dynamic by saying that the Eucharist “was born.” He continues: “*Being a meal* is part of its very structure. ‘Take, eat... Then he took a cup and... gave it to them, saying: Drink from it, all of you’ (Mt 26:26, 27). As such, it expresses the fellowship which God wishes to establish with us and which we ourselves must build with one another.”<sup>1353</sup> The Apostolic Letter confirms that the Eucharistic meal also has a profoundly and primarily *sacrificial* meaning.<sup>1354</sup> “In the Eucharist, Christ makes present to us anew *the sacrifice offered once for all on Golgotha*. Present in the Eucharist as the Risen Lord, he nonetheless bears the marks of his passion, of which every

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<sup>1350</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>1351</sup> *Mane nobiscum Domine*, 11.

<sup>1352</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>1353</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1354</sup> *Ibid.*

Mass is a ‘memorial’”<sup>1355</sup> The Eucharist reminds the faithful of what occurred in the past and that Christ will come again at the end of history.<sup>1356</sup> The Eucharist is a mystery of the “real” presence. It is the fulfillment of Christ’s promise to remain among his followers to the end the world. This eschatological aspect brings with it hope for the Christian journey.<sup>1357</sup>

The Eucharist is source and manifestation of communion. John Paul II uses the model of the *priestly prayer* of Jesus to explain the connection between the Communion in Eucharist and the Church.<sup>1358</sup> The Communion is a source of ecclesial unity; this is expressed by both spiritual and material sharing in the community.<sup>1359</sup>

The eucharistic meal is highlighted in this Apostolic Letter. However, as John Paul II points out the risen Lord still bears the marks of crucifixion. With this in mind, John Paul II still underscores that the meal is part of the very structure of the Eucharist, but the meal has also has a profoundly sacrificial meaning.

The post-Synodal apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* by Benedict XVI describes the Eucharist as the sacrament of charity. The exhortation has a discussion on the Trinitarian reality of the Eucharist.<sup>1360</sup> There the *Deus Trinitas* becomes fully a part of the human condition.<sup>1361</sup> “God’s whole life encounters us and is sacramentally shared with us. God is a perfect communion of love between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”<sup>1362</sup> The victory of the resurrection is highlighted.<sup>1363</sup> The exhortation also explains that the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper took place within the ritual meal commemorating the deliverance from Egypt.<sup>1364</sup> The *Berakah* prayer of Jesus, in which he both thanks his Father for the great gifts of

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<sup>1355</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1356</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1357</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1358</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>1359</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>1360</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 7; 8.

<sup>1361</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>1362</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1363</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>1364</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

the past history, but also for his own ‘exaltation’ may be seen in this light.<sup>1365</sup>

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and summit of the entire celebration and in this: “The ‘subject’ of the liturgy’s beauty is Christ himself, risen and glorified in the Holy Spirit, who includes the Church in his work.”<sup>1366</sup> This prayer is an entering into the prayer of Christ.<sup>1367</sup> It includes thanksgiving, acclamation, epiclesis, institution narrative and consecration, anamnesis, offering, intercessions and final doxology. There is a profound unity between the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the institution narrative whereby “the sacrifice is carried out which Christ himself instituted at the Last Supper”<sup>1368</sup> The liturgy is the gift of God, an entry into the *obsequium rationale*, the rational worship of the Logos. In other words it can be said that the self-giving of God is a participation in the worship of the Incarnate Logos, directed to the Father in the Spirit.<sup>1369</sup> “The Eucharist draws us into Jesus’ act of self-oblation. More than just statically receiving the incarnate Logos, we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giving.”<sup>1370</sup> The exhortation states: “The substantial conversion of bread and wine into his body and blood... penetrates to the heart of all being, a change meant to set off a process which transforms reality, a process leading ultimately to the transfiguration of the entire world, to the point where God will be all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:28).”<sup>1371</sup>

In *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the liturgy is addressed as the gift of God. The theme is love. The communal aspect of the liturgy is central. Communion and unity are concepts that Benedict XVI emphasizes being connected to the Eucharist. The unity of the Church is also expressed in the communion, which is the fruit of the eucharistic action and the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The Eucharistic Prayer, which contains the sacrifice and the offering, is the centre and summit of the Eucharist. It gives an entering into the prayer of Christ. The prayer

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<sup>1365</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>1366</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>1367</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>1368</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1369</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>1370</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>1371</sup> *Ibid.*

has a Trinitarian significance. Christ is doing the will of the Father and his self-surrender is the self-surrender of humankind to the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The exhortation emphasises the Eucharist as a mystery to be believed, a mystery to be celebrated, and a mystery to be lived. The action of Christ drawing the Church into his self-giving is the most characteristic trait. The sacrifice is treated together with the Communion that fulfils the participation in the sacrament and brings unity into the community. Benedict XVI does not emphasise the meal as such, he is keeping with his understanding, already as Cardinal Ratzinger, that the fundamental form of the Eucharist is not a meal but the cosmic, redemptive sacrifice of the Mass.<sup>1372</sup>

### *Conclusion*

My findings of the study of the magisterial documents indicate that the sacrifice is often emphasized. The Eucharist is in close connection with the Paschal Mystery because it is the re-presentation of the sacrifice of the cross. The magisterial documents show that the most central part of the eucharistic sacrifice is the Eucharistic Prayer, the canon of the Mass and that this includes three themes: praise, commemoration and petition. At the centre of the Eucharist is the remembrance of the cross, the re-presentation of Christ's redemption of the world through his death and resurrection. This forms every Mass within the one undivided liturgical action. The Mass is a re-presentation and a commemorative offering, which, to be truly commemorative, includes the self-offering of Christ to the Father as well as the faithful's own self-offering through, with and in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Eucharistic Prayer is concluded with the great Amen, which is the seal by the faithful as confirmation of the prayers of the priest. The self-offering of Christ in every Mass has a link to living daily life as disciples

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<sup>1372</sup> See the discussion on the master "form" of the Mass Joseph Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy*. Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986, 34. See also Joseph Ratzinger "Gestalt und Gehalt der eucharistischen Feier," *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift* 6, 1977, 285-96 as cited by Duffy, *Benedict XVI and the Eucharist*.

of Christ. This link is vital for renewal of the world, because the life of Christ and the Holy Spirit works through human beings acting on the command of Christ.

The real presence is Christ himself sacramentally present, so he himself cannot be separated from the sacrifice. They belong together. Christ is divine and human under the sacramental species, and he is not alone. He is always related to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is sent to the Church from the Father by Christ at Pentecost and is since then present in the Church as the *Paraclete*. Perhaps the communion may also be regarded as central in the interrelationship because the whole eucharistic celebration has as its aim the partaking of Christ? The communion is connected to the person of Christ, who is present and is the food for the soul.

How are the sacrifice, the real presence and the communion related? My interpretation is that the sacrifice is active the whole “time of the Mass.” In a way the sacrifice is already intended before the start of the Eucharist. There is always the intention to do the will of Christ that is interpreted in the documents of the Church as a participation in his self-sacrifice. The sacrifice is carried out at the consecration, realized through the words of institution and the epiclesis, fulfilled during the eucharistic prayer and the communion. It continues to be present at the whole celebration of the Eucharist. The sacrificed and resurrected Christ is present during the whole act both as sacrificing himself and as the sacrificed Lamb. His sacramental presence is there because of the sacrifice, and the communion is a partaking in the victim. From my examination of the documents of the Church, I draw the conclusion that the sacrifice of the Eucharist is the re-presentation of Christ’s redeeming work, which only takes place through sacrifice. The sacrifice of the Eucharist cannot stand isolated from the presence of Christ in his Church and from communion in Christ.

However, there is a unity of the sacrifice, presence and communion, which is the ground for the sacrifice “to remain” and is the “active” ongoing and unifying action through all the events of the Mass. The events I refer to here are the sacrifice of Christ, the sacrifice of the

Christian, and the sacrifice of the Church. If the sacrifice is taken away there will not be any conversion of bread and wine and the sacramental presence would not exist. Sacramental presence cannot exist without the sacrifice, the non-sacramental presence of Christ can.

The communion of the faithful is inserted in the transformation of the whole universe. Communion transforms the faithful and this has an eschatological character because the eucharistic sacrifice will go on until Christ returns with glory. Faith and praxis always go together. The celebration of the Eucharist is aimed at forming the lives of the Christians who take part in fulfilling the work of Christ on earth.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF SACRIFICE IN THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SACRIFICE, REAL PRESENCE, AND COMMUNION**

Vatican II was the most extensive effort at reform that ever took place in the Roman Catholic Church. It aimed at changing the life of the Church by rendering divine salvation more accessible to contemporary men and women. The Mass was underscored as consisting of the liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. There was an opening up that came from the Council in the sense that it allowed the vernacular, exhorted frequent Communion as well as communion in both kinds for the lay faithful. These were important steps forward. Vatican II gave the lay a new kind of self-esteem as being adequate members of the Church.

The key to understanding recent Roman Catholic theology on the Eucharist, and especially the eucharistic sacrifice, is the emphasis on active participation by all the faithful. This development was made possible by the new ecclesiology that had been present already before the Council, but came to its fore during the Council. The active participation together with the new ecclesiology, which emphasises that the Eucharist makes the Church, makes it possible to study the interrelationship between the different parts of the Mass in a new way, starting from the actions of all the faithful. Active participation involves taking part in the eucharistic sacrifice, both by offering and communicating. It is the active participation of the Church that shows how the Eucharist makes the Church and becomes its font and summit. The ecclesial dimension of the sacrament is important. It gives a new starting point for experiencing the eucharistic sacrifice as a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in which the Church enters into the Sacrifice of Christ and the self-offering of Christ becomes the Church's self-

offering. The moment of consecration had been in focus before the Council, with the result that many Roman Catholics considered the sacrifice as something left to the clergy to perform. This changed with Vatican II, which put the active participation of the whole Church in the sacrificial action at its centre.

The celebration of the Eucharist makes the mystery of salvation sacramentally present. By this presence the ecclesial community is created as both a divine as well as a human communion.<sup>1373</sup> The divine communion is the communion with the Father through Christ in the Spirit, and the human communion is the fellowship between brothers and sisters as they share in the mystery. Gradually a new understanding grew in the Church that the sacrifice includes a reality of change, not only of the bread and wine into the Body of Christ, but of the people into the body of Christ.

## **In Conclusion**

My conclusion is that the Eucharist is a sacrifice completed in communion. From this follows that active participation, both the outer acts as well as the inner partaking, is highly important. The aim is the participation of all the people of God in communion with Christ. However, sacrifice and real presence cannot be separated because Christ is acting as priest and sacrifice and is the same person who is sacramentally present in the form of bread and wine. The communion of the sacrifice is the fulfilling of the sacrifice because the sacrifice is not brought to fulfilment if not eaten. That is why the celebrant always has to communicate. From this it follows that communion is intrinsic to the sacrifice. The sacrifice of the Eucharist is central but is not just one step or one part of the Eucharist. The sacrifice is the sacrifice of Christ, a gift from God and is the intrinsic action that keeps and preserves the full relationship between sacrifice, real presence and communion.

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<sup>1373</sup> Békés “The Eucharist Makes the Church”, in Latourelle (ed.), *Vatican II*: Vol.2, 347.



My study of the eucharistic theology of Ratzinger, Schillebeeckx, and Power ends with the conclusion that *exitus* and *reditus* might be a way to look at the communication between human beings and God, the mystery of the Eucharist that will continue until Christ comes again in Glory.

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