in a building erected specifically for the purpose of worship. Even today no essential theological difference is perceived between a Eucharist celebrated in a private home and the most solemn Mass in the most ornate cathedral of the world.

Yet as soon as it has become politically and economically feasible, Christians began the building of Churches even during the first centuries of periodic persecution. They called these buildings *domus ecclesiae* "house of the assembly" so that the name itself would make clear *that the building derived its sacred character from the eucharistic assembly (ecclesia), rather than the assembly becoming sanctified by contact with the sacred building.* Jungmann points out also the fact that the Christian Church buildings were radically different from the pagan ones since they had to house the whole assembly. The pagan temples provided enough space only for the altar and the officiating priests while in the Christian liturgy the whole assembly is "a holy priesthood" that offers the spiritual sacrifice of the Eucharist, which is comprised both of Christ himself and of themselves "through Him, with Him and in Him."

The above theology of sacred space obviously allows for many different architectural styles and for many different arrangements of the inner space and shape of the Church building. At the same time, however, not all arrangements of inner space and outer shape equally express all the dimensions of the eucharistic mystery; in fact, some forms are positively contrary to the truth of Christian sacred space. For instance, in any arrangement the altar should be the natural focus of attention rather than the congregation; the congregation, however, should not be unduly distanced from the altar, since the whole community celebrates the eucharistic sacrifice. Yet, as pointed out earlier, the specific role of Christ as the head of the body, his Church, and the radical dependence of his Church on Christ is sacramentally expressed by the unique role of the ministerial priest (bishop or presbyter) in the eucharistic celebration. This presiding role of the ministerial priest should also be visibly expressed; it would be wrong for him to "melt" into the celebrating congregation. Moreover, since Christ wants to remain permanently with his people in the Eucharist, the tabernacle in which the Holy Eucharist is reserved for adoration "should be placed in a part of the Church that is prominent, conspicuous, beautifully decorated and suitable for prayer."[23]

II. The Liturgy of the Word

Apart from Hippolytus's *Apostolic Tradition* (in which the eucharistic liturgy is described as it follows an episcopal ordination), all available documents attest that the liturgy of the word always had to precede the liturgy of the Eucharist. This two-stage structure of the Christian liturgy had begun to emerge early enough to influence the writing of some texts of the New Testament. The most enlightening and the earliest piece is Luke 24:13–32. On the first day of the week after his Crucifixion the risen Lord joins the two distressed disciples on their way to Emmaus. They do not recognize him, but their hearts warm up and burn with faith as the stranger explains to them "all the Scriptures that were about himself" (24:27). Only after they accept with faith the word of the Lord who has unfolded for them the christological meaning of the Old Testament (24:32), do the disciples recognize him "in the breaking of the bread" (24:35). The account makes clear the reason for the two stage structure of the Liturgy: because our senses and our mind, left to their own natural resources, cannot appreciate Christ's sacramental presence, the eyes of faith must first be opened by listening to the Word of Christ. In this way, our sense perception, supplemented by the light of faith, may discover Christ under the signs of bread and wine.

This paradigm for Christian worship is confirmed by the structure of the eucharistic discourse in the Gospel of John. In the first part of the discourse (6:26–47) the emphasis is on our coming to Jesus, on our having faith in Jesus as a result of being taught by the Father (45). Once the importance of faith in receiving the inward teaching of the Father and the outward teaching of Jesus is made clear, Jesus then begins to speak about a more intimate union with him through eating his flesh and drinking his blood (48–58).

The letter to the Hebrews shows a similar twofold structure. In the first part (1:1—4:13) we are called upon to listen to the Word of God while we are still on our pilgrimage toward the Sabbath rest of God. In the second part the entry of our High Priest Jesus into the heavenly sanctuary is emphasized, and we are called upon to enter the same sanctuary in his blood and through the living road that is his flesh (4:14—12:29).

Thus, listening to Christ's teachings, his deeds and sufferings in history enkindle our desire to meet the same person in our personal history so that he may personally address to us the same words, that he may personally perform the same deeds in our lives, and that we may unite our sufferings with his life-giving passion. Just as there is an intrinsic connection and natural dynamism between the gradual and fragmentary coming of the Word in the Old Testament and its incarnate, personal presence among us in the New Testament, so does the hearing of the Word of God lead us to receive the incarnate Person of the Word into our lives.

Clement of Alexandria and Origen did not clearly see the progression from the presence of Christ in his Word to his Presence in his body and blood, nor do a number of contemporary theologians. They simply juxtapose the two tables, the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist.

Only if we accept an anthropology that has been shaped and developed under the impact of revelation, do we understand that the incarnate Son cannot be as fully present to us flesh and blood human beings through his Word as he is through his body in the Eucharist.[24] Just as human beings cannot be in full communion with others without involving their bodies in one way or another, so the incarnate Son of God cannot be fully present to us in a human way short of in a bodily presence. This reasoning becomes even more compelling if we consider the purpose of Christ's presence. He comes not simply to elicit from us a response of faith but, as the consequence of that faith, to elicit an offering of our own bodily selves to the Father through him. *How could we fully unite our bodily selves to Christ unless he gives us his own body?* The same logic of God's humble adjustment to human nature explains both the mystery of the incarnation and the Eucharist.

However, just as listening to the words of a dear friend on the phone increases our desire for direct, bodily presence, so the Word of God proclaimed and explained, enkindles our faith and prepares us for the personal presence of Christ under the signs of bread and wine.

The preparation for Christ's sacrificial presence in the Eucharist is only one purpose for the liturgy of the word. The words of Christ that enkindle our desire to be united with him in the fullest possible measure obtain their own full actualization in eucharistic

communion. The liturgy expresses this fact by often using a quote or paraphrase from the readings of the Mass for the communion antiphon. Take for instance the Mass in honor of Blessed Kateri Tetakwitha. The communion antiphon reads: "The wise virgin chose the better part for herself and it shall not be taken away from her." Only after we offer ourselves in union with Christ and unite our bodies and souls with his glorified humanity, do these words of Jesus become reality for us. His words at that point are no longer a preparation for his coming in person in the Eucharist but rather bring to light an aspect of what is actually happening in eucharistic communion. To stay with the above example, the communicants in hearing these words, should know that they accomplish in them what they say: in the very act of communion they too chose the better part, the best part: Christ pledges himself to remain their possession forever. They can now offer Him and themselves in union with Him to the Father.

If we were to completely disengage from the scriptures our response to Christ in sacramental communion, we would fall into a subjective sentimentalism that could easily distort the meaning and purpose of Christ's coming to us.

In summary, the presence of Christ in his Word, prepares us for Christ's eucharistic presence. At the same time, the scripture readings explain for us the eucharistic Lord's manifold activity within us. The link between the liturgy of the word and that of the Eucharist is so strong that Vatican II speaks about these two parts of the Mass as one act of worship.[25]

The Preparation of the Gifts III.

In the eucharistic texts of the New Testament no mention is made of the offering of bread and wine prior to their becoming the effective signs of Christ's presence. The first one in Christian literature to mention the bringing of material gifts to the presider at the celebration is Saint Justin in the middle of the second century. He simply states that the bread, wine and water to be used for the eucharistic celebration are brought to the president, but no sacrificial significance is attached to this action.[26] In his argument against the Marcionites in which he points out that the God of creation is the same God as the Father of Jesus Christ. Irenaeus is the first theologian to emphasize

that the Church offers to the Father of Jesus Christ the first fruits of creation as a sacrificial offering.[27] Yet he does not consider the bread and wine as sacrifice in themselves apart from the eucharistic action in which they become the body and blood of the Lord. Only a later position, which developed gradually, attributed more and more emphasis to the preliminary offering of the gifts before consecration and thus led to a false assumption according to which the offertory was a sacrifice in itself rather than a mere preparation. Some began to regard this offering as the sacrifice of the Church, distinguished from the sacrifice of Christ, which took place after consecration.[28]

The reform of the Mass after Vatican II changed both the prayers of what had come to be called Offertory and even the name "Offertory," replacing it with the name "Preparation of the Gifts" in order to avoid any misunderstanding about there being two consecutive sacrificial offerings. In contrast to the one true sacrificial offering of the body and blood of the Lord within the eucharistic prayer or anaphora, we have at this point only a preliminary offering which serves as a mere preparation for the actual sacrifice.

Yet in conjunction with what follows in the structure of the Mass, the offertory procession and the offering of the bread and wine have a valid theological meaning. We bring to the altar and offer to God "this bread . . . which earth has given and human hands have made" as well as "this wine . . . fruit of the vine and work of human hands." In both cases, however, we add the final outcome of this offering: they will become for us "the bread of life" and "our spiritual drink."

The preparation of the gifts then symbolizes the highest achievement of what we human beings are capable of on our own, even as baptized members of the Church and animated by a living faith. At the same time it also points out the dynamism of the liturgical action: our gifts will not be annihilated and replaced by the body and blood of Christ nor do they remain simply juxtaposed to the eucharistic sacrifice; rather it is our gifts of bread and wine that will *become* our "bread of life" and "our spiritual drink." We need to discuss here in more detail the theological meaning of "transubstantiation" or to use a less commonly misunderstood term, the ontological change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.[29]

What the people offer at this point through, and along with, the ministerial priest are ontologically ordinary bread and wine, yet precisely their ontological reality serves as the basis for multiple, interconnected symbolic meanings.

1. In the Jewish culture where the incarnation took place, bread and wine reminded the people of God's creation. With some effort of empathy even people of very different cultures where other forms of food and drink are more widely used, can recognize the symbolic meanings of bread and wine.[30] It is God's earth that produces the grain and the grape, the raw materials for our gifts. *Thus, through the bread and wine we offer to God his own creation, acknowledge our total dependence on the Creator, and praise his generosity and the goodness of his gifts.*

2. The bread and wine, however, do not represent creation in its pristine state before human civilization has touched it. On the contrary, the production of bread from the sowing of the seed through harvesting the grain and baking the bread up to its being placed in the ciborium on the altar engages the work of many human hands with different expertise; it brings into motion the whole intertwining web of human society. The wine in the chalice is likewise the result of a long process of human work and social interaction. While the bread is our most necessary food, wine is the symbol of what is more than just basic nourishment. It suggests an atmosphere of celebration and leisure, which are the sources of any cultural activity. Wine is used for festive gatherings where people enjoy life and each other's company. *Thus the bread and wine aptly stand for all that is good in human civilization and culture which transforms and perfects (rather than destroys) nature.*

3. Finally, the bread and wine before consecration stand for the human person in the totality of his/her personal, social, economic and cultural relations. On the one hand we spend ourselves in "earning bread" and making wine, in sustaining and enriching the human community, civilization and culture. On the other hand, we are what we eat and drink; the bread and wine signify our lives in the world, our vital energies, our minds and hearts. In other words, *the bread and wine stand for our embodied selves in manifold interaction with society and God's creation.*

To summarize all three aspects, we may say that *the preparation of the gifts expresses our intention to offer to God the whole of his creation, our efforts to build a civilization of love, and ultimately our own personal and social selves.* Yet the structure of all the original eucharistic rites and the change of the offertory into a preparation of gifts in the post–Vatican II Western liturgy make it very clear that this is only a preparatory step rather than a sacrificial act in itself. No real sacrifice is possible before and apart from the consecration of the gifts. This fundamental fact brings to light both the highest dignity and the deepest misery of the human being: it manifests both our will to give ourselves and all of creation back to God as a perfect gift and our radical inability to do so.

Why can we not offer a perfect gift to God as long as we are left to our own human resources? Biblical revelation, liturgical tradition and theological understanding provide two reasons for this inability.

1. Only the Son knows the Father; he alone understands the Father's infinite splendor, truth and love both in himself and as revealed in his creation. Consequently, only the Son-made-man can offer himself with such an infinite love, praise, and thanksgiving worthy of the Father's infinite perfection. Briefly, only God can give a perfect gift to God.

2. Moreover, humankind has sinned. Original sin and the increasing avalanche of personal sins have separated us from God. Burdened by our sins, we cannot approach God and live. This awareness comes to light most dramatically in the experience of Israel, but is also attested to in the most primitive religions of humankind. Before we can petition, praise, and ultimately love God, we need to obtain forgiveness for our sins. From the very beginning of history humankind has felt the need for atonement. Yet the continuously flowing blood of human and animal victims outside and inside Israel brings to light the awareness that no sacrificial victim could be found to provide the reconciliation humankind had been looking for. Only the innocent Son of God who took upon himself all the consequences of our sins could offer the Father an atoning love in our place and for our sake, which would obtain free access for all of us to the Father. Only in this way does God's infinite love and wisdom become fully manifest, a love and wisdom that turns the worst evil into the greatest manifestation of his infinite love.

Even though not a sacrifice in itself, the Preparation of the Gifts is indispensable for the eucharistic sacrifice. The Father does not destroy our gifts nor does he simply place them next to the sacrifice of his own Son. Rather, he accepts our gifts of bread and wine so that they will become our bread of life and spiritual drink, the body and blood of his Son. This fact of transformation has been constantly attested to in the Church since the second century.[31] It was expressed in most eucharistic liturgies much before the philosophical-theological formulation of the doctrine of transubstantiation had begun. The fact that our gifts are transformed into the true sacrifice of Christ rather than replaced (or juxtaposed to the body and blood of Christ) has important consequences for Christian existence. Just as the Father does not reject our material offerings, he does not reject the inner attitudes expressed in them; on the contrary, he takes seriously our efforts at repentance and our desire (already inspired by his grace) to give back ourselves and the universe to him in atonement, thanksgiving and praise. As the gifts of bread and wine are changed into the sacrificed humanity of his Son, so are our offerings to God of ourselves, our work, and all creation to be transformed into the Son's perfect gift of self. Through him, with him, and in him we can and should become the perfect sacrifice of thanksgiving, petition and atonement.

Thus, we would be oversimplifying the facts if (as it has often been done) we said that the bread and wine offered to God at the beginning of the Mass constituted our gifts to God while the body and blood of Christ are God's gifts to us. We should rather say that our gifts at the beginning of the Mass become *the* perfect and acceptable sacrifice only through the consecration as they are turned into Christ's perfect gift of self. The Father's gift to us is completed in making *us* "an everlasting gift" to himself through, with, and in his Son by the unifying power of his Spirit. In order to expand on these themes, we need to consider the theology of the eucharistic prayers themselves.

Eucharistia–Toda–Berakah

The solemn eucharistic prayers of the Church probably developed from the prayers of the Jewish *toda* sacrifice and from the blessings

said at festive Jewish meals *(berakah)*. These prayers praise God the Creator and the Savior of Israel, who gave Israel the land and the law; by reminding Him of his mighty deeds in the past, they call upon his saving intervention in the present.[32] The Christian prayers naturally continued this twofold approach of praise and invocation (epiclesis) but were filled with Christian content, both giving thanks for the culmination of God's saving acts in Jesus Christ, and in the context of thanksgiving recalling his words and gestures over the bread and cup at his Last Supper.

The ministerial priest speaks at this point in the eucharistic celebration primarily in the name of the Church rather than of Christ. However, the Church, which gives thanks through the priest, is not restricted to the particular celebrating congregation. Every eucharistic prayer takes place in communion with the universal Church scattered throughout the world and also joins with the thanksgiving of all the angels and saints of the heavenly court who praise God unceasingly. We finish every preface of the Roman liturgy with words like these:

> With all the angels and saints we sing forever to your glory:
> "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might."

The threefold acclamation of holy is taken from the heavenly song of the seraphim around God's throne as described in Isaiah 6:1–9. In the Byzantine liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom the worshipping congregation is not only concelebrating with the angelic court, but making present on earth their heavenly worship insofar as we "mystically represent the Cherubim" in our eucharistic liturgy.[33] Our prayer of thanksgiving then takes place at the point of contact of our time and God's eternity, our history and God's Kingdom.

IV. Epiclesis and the Words of Institution

The eucharistic thanksgiving prayed by the presider in the name of the Church is not a mere psychological act of remembering God's mighty deeds in the past. Through Christ we are actually lifted up into the Father's presence, the primordial source of Trinitarian life and of salvation history. There is no past, present and future for Him but only an eternal presence encompassing the whole duration of history. That the celebrating community does indeed enter into the Father's presence

is assured by the Holy Spirit. He incorporates us into the one Christ and makes us share in the mind and memory of Christ. As we recall the Father's mighty deeds that He has wrought through his Son, they become present to us in the Holy Spirit. However, the eucharistic prayer does not simply call to mind God's past beneficence toward us. Emboldened by what God has done for us, the presiding minister shifts from thanksgiving to the *epiclesis*, calling upon the Holy Spirit to accomplish a new creative act here and now in this celebration. In the Third Eucharistic Prayer he prays in these words:

> And so Father, we bring you these gifts.
> We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit,
> that they may become the body and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this Eucharist.

Over the past centuries Orthodox and Catholics have vigorously debated about whether the epiclesis or the words of institution effect the transformation of the gifts into the body and blood of Christ. Establishing an either/or alternative, however, is not quite appropriate since it implies that one can separate the action of Christ from that of the Holy Spirit. Christ himself prayed to the Father in the Holy Spirit before each of his important actions, in particular, before he chose the Twelve and before he raised Lazarus from the dead. His authoritative "Amen, I say to you" sentence which introduces his utterances of absolute authority implies a previous dialogue of prayer with the Father: His teaching and action are always in response to his Father, a response that, in turn, takes place in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the eucharistic prayer, the prayer of the Church is lifted up to become the prayer of Christ. The fact that only an ordained priest, who represents both Christ and the inclusion of the Church in Christ, can pray this prayer demonstrates on the level of sacramental signification that the prayer of the Church is taken up into that of Christ. The celebrant asks in this prayer for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit from the Father upon the gifts of bread and wine so that they may become the body and blood of his Son. In the Western post–Vatican II eucharistic prayers he begins to recite the words of institution only after this invocation. This shows clearly that the consecration is not a simple act of "command" but the infallible

response of the Father to the prayer of the Church in which his Son's prayer is actualized. It is in the power of the Holy Spirit that the priest's use of the words of Christ ("this is my body . . . this is the cup of my blood . . . ") becomes not a mere recitation of Christ's past words at the Last Supper but their actualization in the present celebration.[34] The Fathers rightly insist that the words of consecration are analogous in meaning and power to the word of God that has created the universe and to the words the angel transmits to Mary: they do effect what they signify and they effect what only God can effect: a new creation.

Anamnesis and the Offering of Sacrifice

Following directly after the acclamation, in the same breath as the offering of the gifts, the celebrant in the name of the assembly recalls the main stages of the mystery of our salvation.[35] The Fourth Eucharistic Prayer's anamnesis is the most complete:

> Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
> We recall Christ's death, his descent among the dead,
> his Resurrection, and his ascension to your right hand;
> and, looking forward to his coming in glory,
> we offer you his body and blood,
> the acceptable sacrifice
> which brings salvation to the whole world.

As said before, the anamnesis is no mere psychological recall of the past but the making present of the saving events of Christ's mystery both in so far as we share through the Spirit in the "memory" of the risen Christ, and in so far as these saving events are acting upon us. As a result, in every eucharistic celebration we participate (to the extent that we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us) more and more in the *transitus* of Christ by passing over from our sinful, self-centered existence in the flesh to a new life of trust and loving service that anticipates our risen and glorified state.

The main verb of the sentence we have quoted above from the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer, "we offer you his body and blood," focuses on the defining moment of Jesus's *transitus* and, consequently, on that of our participation in it. Jesus' passing over from this life to the glory of the Father has been the stage-by-stage translation into concrete

acts of his offering of the self that he had begun with his first conscious act of human freedom ("Behold, I come to do your will, O God!"),[36] expressed prophetically in the Last Supper, and consummated on the cross. These acts of human self-offering, taken collectively, are the realization through a human existence in history of the eternal and total self-donation of the Son to his Father. For this reason the self-offering of Jesus is not just the voluntary self-sacrifice of a human being that may be long remembered but irretrievably past for us in the present. On the contrary, being the self-offering of God the Son in his humanity, this act has such ontological depth and power that our constantly repeated acts of participation in Christ's self-offering can never exhaust it. The Catholic teaching, then, is the exact opposite of what Luther was disputing. He thought (and we have seen that enough errors were circulating around him to make his misunderstanding intelligible) that Catholics tried to offer Christ again and again in the Mass because they assumed that Christ's sacrifice on the cross was not sufficient for the forgiveness of all sins. In reality, Catholics believe that the sacrifice of the cross (the climax of the sacrifice of his whole life) is of such infinite value that it allows and, in fact, calls for our ever-renewed participation. Our offering of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, then, does not imply a new act on Christ's part that would be considered an addition to his historical act of self-offering; rather, every celebration of the Eucharist implies, on our part, a new act of our participation in the numerically same, inexhaustible act of Jesus' self-offering.

Our dependence on Christ is so complete that, as we have seen, even our participation in his sacrifice is Christ's work: it is by the recitation of his words over the bread and the wine that these are changed into his sacrificed and risen humanity. His body and his blood are no longer separated in the Eucharist as they were during Christ's death; but the two distinct signs of bread and wine, symbolizing separately his body and blood, reveal the sacrificial presence of the risen Christ. He stands before the throne of God as "the Lamb as if slain," in the state of sacrifice.

He has become so fully the sacrifice of his Church that in the eucharistic prayers we do not hear the sacrificial prayers of Christ, but only those of the Church. The assembly offers through the priest and with the priest "this holy and living sacrifice," "the acceptable

sacrifice which brings salvation to the whole world," "this holy and perfect sacrifice."

In certain epicleses the priest asks that the Holy Spirit may descend not only on the gifts but also upon us so that we may worthily receive the mysteries.[37] Again, in other epicleses we ask that our reception of the body and blood of Christ may result in our being sanctified and united by the Holy Spirit:

> 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.[38]

This twofold epiclesis—the first asking for the transformation of the gifts, the second for that of the celebrating community—reveals both the analogy of these two actions and the close connection between them; the transubstantiation of the gifts takes place so the community may be transformed into one body and one spirit in Christ.

Every eucharistic prayer reaches beyond the limits of the celebrating assembly by remembering the Virgin Mother of God and the saints as well as by offering intercessions for the living and dead. The First Eucharistic Prayer (the Roman Canon) does not only remember Mary and the saints but also celebrates our communion "with the ever virgin mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God" and with all the apostles, martyrs and saints.[39]

It seems that before the eucharistic sacrifice is completed in Holy Communion where we grow more fully into "the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise," and "an everlasting gift" to the Father, the Church, as it were, relishes and savors the greatest treasure she has, Christ himself, as her own sacrifice. He alone is the *"hostia pura, hostia sancta, hostia immaculata"* that has been given to her from the Father by the Holy Spirit.[40] She instinctively offers her intercessory prayers while Christ himself is on the altar in the full intensity of his sacrificial presence rather than later, after Holy Communion when he is present in us and works in us only to the extent that our freedom opens us up to Him.

For whom is the eucharistic sacrifice offered? Evidently every Eucharist is always and everywhere offered for the whole Church. Yet, since the Eucharist was established to make present the sacrifice of Christ for each local Church community spread out in time and space, the one perfect sacrifice of Christ is offered in a special way for the

community that celebrates it: for the intentions of those who celebrate it as well as for the intentions of those who make a special offering for that Mass. It is not the material value of the offering in itself that counts but the inner disposition that it expresses.

It is remarkable that not all the ancient eucharistic liturgies pray for the salvation of the world.[41] The all-embracing intention of Christ's sacrifice is certainly implicit in the words of the institution: the blood of Christ is poured out "for many," the original Aramaic meaning of which is an all-inclusive multitude. In the Gospel of John Christ makes it very clear that the bread he gives is his "flesh for the life of the world" (John 6:51). Timothy 2:1–4 encourages public liturgical prayers for all since God wants the salvation of all human beings. Paul wants to be all to all men so that he may save some of them (1 Corinthians 9:22). He sums up his vocation as apostle in liturgical terms: he received God's grace to be the "liturgist *[leitourgon]* of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles in performing the sacred service of the Gospel of God, so that the offering up of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:16). The implication is unambiguous if we look at it in the context of Pauline theology: Paul intends to bring to Christ all the Gentiles and unite them to the one perfect offering of Christ in the Holy Spirit. But it is not clear whether in the Pauline Eucharist there was explicit prayer for the salvation of the whole world. Saint Thomas echoes Saint Augustine (and a long tradition) when he declares the principle underlying the eucharistic practice of the Western Church, which prays only for her members:

> As Christ's passion benefits all insofar as it is sufficient for the forgiveness of sins and the attaining of grace and glory, though it produces no effect save in those who are united to his passion through faith and charity, so likewise this sacrifice, which is a memorial of the Lord's passion, has no effect save on those who are united to the sacrament through faith and charity. Accordingly Augustine writes, "Who may offer Christ's body except for those who are his members?" And so the canon of the Mass makes no prayer for those who are outside the Church.[42]

On the basis of this text, then, the principle that justifies the exclusion of prayer for the salvation of the world from the Roman Canon seems to be the mystical identity between the eucharistic body

thereby joins us to all human beings, in fact to the whole of creation. However, we can receive Jesus' gift of himself only to the extent that, while renouncing our craving to possess and control, we also become a gift through Jesus to the Father and nourishing "food and drink" for our fellow humans. Thus the widespread, passive, consumerist attitude toward Holy Communion with which we abuse Christ by trying to possess him and ensure "the benefits" of his redemption for us needs to be eradicated. Only by giving up our struggle to dominate then further by allowing ourselves to become a gift for the Father, can we hope to achieve communion with Christ, and through Christ, with other people. Thus the theocentric and ecclesial-communitarian aspect of Holy Communion are interdependent and both should shape the concrete forms of its celebration.

Before Vatican II, the prevailing attitude toward Holy Communion was to foster "a personal conversation with the Lord," concentrating on our own individual petitions, praise, thanksgiving, and atonement although our petitions and atonement often involved other people too. Nowadays, the dominant practice is to sing a communion hymn while coming in procession for Holy Communion. This intends to manifest that by receiving the Eucharist we are being built up into the one body of Christ, the Church. By the time we are able to settle down to some individual conversation with Christ, the parish bulletin announcements drag us back to the mundane realities of daily life.

The nature of the eucharistic celebration, however, as emphasized by the Council itself, calls for the integration of both aspects. *We can be united to each other only to the extent that we are united to Christ himself; on the other hand, we cannot be united to Christ if we isolate ourselves from our brothers and sisters.* Communion with Christ and with each other are inseparable. Yet the source of our communion with one another is our communion with Christ. In every Eucharist according to Saint Paul "we proclaim the death of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:26). This proclamation means not only the recitation of words but also a real participation in his sacrificial death. Our sinful self that idolizes this world, that lives only for the desires of the flesh in unbridled sensuality, the desire of the eyes in greed for possessions, and the pride of life in considering ourselves the center of the universe

(1 John 2:16) must die more and more in every eucharistic celebration so that we may share in the life of the risen Christ. This means a confident placing of our whole existence into the Father's hands with gratitude and a share in Christ's love for our fellow human beings so that in Christ we ourselves may become nourishing bread and gladdening wine for them.

Our assimilation to Christ is so real that according to Paul those who partake of the one (eucharistic) bread become one body, the extension of the body-person of Christ into the world (1 Corinthians 10:16–17).[45] In other words, just as the personal body of Christ expresses his divine life and communicates his divine love to us, so must our bodies share in the same task. In our bodily, social reality we are to become the manifestation of the bodily reality of Christ in this world. Whatever work we do, in performing our duty we will try not only to do a good job but also make our work into an expression of the love that comes from Christ.

This twofold aspect of Holy Communion should also manifest itself in the eucharistic celebration: common singing and prayerful silence, the expression of unity with one another and the opening up to Christ in personal prayer should go hand in hand, the one aspect must not suppress the other. Only if we allow Christ to transform us, will we discover and love Him in our brothers and sisters. And conversely, the life of Christ cannot grow in us unless we also accept Him in our fellow human beings.

Incidentally, the more a parish tries to cater to the changing taste of its parishioners by trying to create a liturgical celebration that is always novel and exciting, the more people will complain that they are thoroughly bored and that "they do not get anything out of the Mass." Such attitudes reveal the intrusion of a consumerist mentality into both the shapers and participants of our liturgical celebrations: we come, in other words, in order to get some tangible results that prove that spending our time in Church was not a waste. If this attitude prevails in a community, a radical reorientation is needed. We must recover the understanding that we come to give rather than to get something. Yet the Gospel paradox reveals its truth here with a particular force. "Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25). If we desire to be assimilated to Christ who has become a gift in the totality of his existence, a gift of praise to God

and atonement and nourishment for others, he will most certainly accomplish this miracle in us; it will occur gradually, almost imperceptibly, but in reality and truth. We will experience that the Eucharist is indeed an inexhaustible source of repentance, renewal, trust, love, and perseverance.

As mentioned earlier, the Eucharist, being the body and blood of Christ, also has an effect on our bodies. In the Gospel of John Christ announces, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:54). That the Eucharist assures the immortality of our flesh is especially emphasized by Irenaeus and remains part of the 2,000-year-old tradition of the Church. This is to be taken not in the simplistic sense that the flesh of those who partake of the Eucharist would not decay. All the Fathers knew that this could not be true. However, the Eucharist, received in faith into our bodies, nourishes and transforms the soul. Our new risen bodies will have a real continuity with our earthly bodies, not because of the identity of the material particles (all our material particles are, as a matter of scientific fact, replaced within a number of years in our earthly life) but because of the identity of our soul that will transform the risen body according to its own likeness. In other words, *the Eucharist transforms our souls, and our transformed souls will then assimilate our resurrected bodies into their own likeness.*

It is an almost universally forgotten truth that the bodily effect of the Eucharist is perceptible already in this life. In every Mass, the priest prays before communion that his receiving of the body and blood of the Lord may heal both his soul and body. Although clinical healings by the Holy Eucharist have always occurred in the history of the Church, the ordinary bodily effect, while different from clinical healing, is even more astoundingly real. The Eucharist does promote the healing of the body in the sense that its passions and urges no longer prevent us from living the life of Christ; in fact, as it has been observed in the saints, all our actions and words, even our body language, begin to radiate that love which comes from Christ and expresses Christ. *The pure flesh of Christ is "contagious": it will transmit some of its purity to our flesh. His blood is like choice wine: it will communicate to us that "sobriety" of the Spirit, which knows no limit in loving and serving.*

Eucharist and Eschatology

Around the end of the second millennium an expectation of the end of the world intensified among many fundamentalist Christians. Ignoring this eschatological mood, an influential segment of Catholic theologians continues to be preoccupied with formulating blueprints for building a just society in this world while neglecting to reflect on its eschatological consummation. In fact, some have tried to design a master plan for the transformation of society, motivated with such ultimate zeal by the assumption that God's kingdom could be built up by grace-filled human efforts. The majority of even practicing Catholics in the first world try "to live a good life" here on earth; for them belief in eternal life seems to be just a "last straw" to hang onto for consolation after all efforts for prolonging a fruitful life on earth have proved useless. Eternal life, heaven, and hell appear much less real for the average First World Catholic than life in this world; we tend to imagine life after death as a tenuous, ghostly existence, similar to the shadowy world of pagan myths. All these beliefs and attitudes are directly challenged by the reality of the eucharistic celebration.

While we have to promote as much as possible "a civilization of love," Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of heaven will not arrive in its fullness by means of our efforts (even if these efforts are helped by God's grace) but by the gracious gift of the Father. The full arrival of the kingdom will be an extension of God's already existing heavenly kingdom both into our hearts and into human history. When we ask that his "will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we are stating our fervent desire that our world be integrated into this heavenly realm, where countless hosts of angels bask in the splendor of God's glory and praise him night and day. For Jesus, the extension of this heavenly realm to earth is the goal of his life and death. The metaphor seen as most important in explaining the nature of the Kingdom is that of the wedding banquet. Jesus' parables, his meals with the disciples, his multiplication of the loaves, are all educational tools and signs to prepare us for this eschatological marriage feast. It is in the Last Supper that all his teachings about the Kingdom become reality: the Kingdom is communion with him and with each other, established in his free gift of the self through his impending violent death. The awareness of his imminent betrayal and death cannot shake Jesus'

to reaffirm this forcefully at the beginning of the new millennium, so that Christians will feel more obliged than ever not to neglect their duties as citizens in this world. Theirs is the task of contributing with the light of the Gospel to the building of a more human world, a world fully in harmony with God's plan.[50]

"Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord": The Eucharist and Christian Morality

From the first writings of the New Testament, Christian morality and eucharistic celebration were seen as intrinsically connected. Since there were factions and divisions in the Corinthian community and a lack of sharing between the rich and the poor, Paul passed a heavy judgment on them: "When you gather in one place, it is not the eating of the Lord's Supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20). He is not saying that they do not validly celebrate the Eucharist, but that their way of celebrating destroys its very meaning. In the somewhat idealized narratives of the Acts, however, the center of the joyful community life of the first Christians was their eucharistic breaking of bread and the common meals connected with the Eucharist, meals taken "in joy and sincerity of heart" (2:42; 46). The Eucharist is the source of their brotherly love and praise of God.

Christian morality, in fact, tended either toward legalism (a mere summary of prohibitions and minimalist prescriptions) or toward an unjustifiable adaptation to the morality of a given culture whenever Christian living was separated from its source and model in the Eucharist.

The new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has again restored the organic link between Christian sacraments (in particular, the Eucharist) and Christian morality by putting its treatment of morality subsequent to its treatment of the sacraments.

Christian living is indeed the extension into daily life of what happens in the eucharistic celebration. If we allow ourselves to become truly "one body and one spirit in Christ," we will see the concrete tasks of the two great commandments, love of God and love of neighbor, in a new light. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we offer to the Father our own bodies, that is, ourselves as expressed in our bodily actions,

through and with the eucharistic body of Christ. This taking up of ourselves into Christ's sacrificed humanity is our "living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (cf. Romans 12:2; cf. 1 Peter 2:5). Just as in the historical sacrifice of Christ, worship of God and service of man are inseparably united in the Eucharist. How can we refuse to share our material goods with those who are in need when Christ shared his own body with us? Overcoming social and racial divisions, practicing social justice and working for a more just society are only a necessary beginning without which we become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord just as the Corinthians did at the time of Paul (1 Corinthians 11:27).

The fact that Christ has made his sacrifice present for us in the form of food and drink points beyond the requirements of social justice. It means that not only Saint Ignatius of Antioch, but also all of us, should become "pure bread of Christ."[51] Most Christians are not called to literal martyrdom, yet all of us are called to become nourishing "food" for each other. Rather than poisoning each other's life by exploitative and possessive relationships, we should engage our whole existence in affirming and serving each other. Such nourishing relationships become possible only to the extent that we mediate Christ's love for those around us.

The specifically Christian motivation for chastity outside and within marriage also has a eucharistic foundation. "The body . . . is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body" (1 Corinthians 6:13). In the context of the Church's tradition, these words imply that our bodies do not belong to us but to the Lord who, through the Eucharist, incorporates our bodies into his body, the Church. Through his Holy Spirit Christ wants to live in us and sanctify us. Therefore, on the one hand, by sexual immorality we would desecrate our bodies that have become "members of Christ" (1 Corinthians 6:15–16). On the other hand, by transforming our bodies through contact with his glorified body, the Lord will transform our stormy passions into the fire of chaste love.

The more we live from the Eucharist, the more this way of living becomes a light burden. It is true that "we carry about in our bodies the dying of Christ" but to that extent also the power of his risen life becomes manifest in our bodies (2 Corinthians 4:10–11).

signs can express a variety of meanings. For instance, a human sign expressing a promise does not signify something other than itself; the sign does effect the promise; it is, in fact, its concrete realization. In much the same way does a divine sign of a promise effect and embody the promise. Thus, in order to bring to light the qualitative difference between divine and human sign making we need to restrict the notion of sign.[6] The category of signs we consider here are signs of personal self-communication, expressing the fundamental dynamism of divine and human love. The application of this kind of signs to divine and human self-communication should reveal more clearly the "infinite qualitative difference" between the divine and human kinds of symbolic action than is brought to light in the average transignification theory.

Instead of starting from the analysis of human self-communication through symbols, our starting point will be the revealed mystery of the incarnation.[7] When the Son, sent by the Father, chooses to reveal and communicate himself to all mankind, he becomes man. Through the existential changes of human growth, suffering, death, and Resurrection, the human nature of Jesus becomes the direct and complete self-revelation and self-communication of the Son. Neither the hypostatic union nor his death and Resurrection annihilate the Son's human nature. On the contrary, human nature reaches its highest transcendent potential through becoming the eternal Son's direct and complete self-communication.

The crucified and risen Christ wants to give himself, directly and completely (as our perfect sacrifice to the Father and as our spiritual food assimilating us to Him), to every human being in this world. So that he may give himself to us in a way that respects our earthly human condition, he has established a way to reveal and communicate himself to us through the visible signs of the Holy Eucharist.

VI.

In the eucharistic consecration Christ not only changes the meaning of the bread and wine, but changes their material reality, their "substance." By "substance" I mean here the bread and the wine insofar as their different empirical qualities (their size, shape, color, smell, and so on) are the qualities of two things that exist in themselves, as it were, "in their own right." In the moment of transubstantiation, the bread and wine are not annihilated but rather assumed by Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to become the effective signs

of Christ's body and blood. The change is so complete that the bread and wine no longer exist in themselves as bread and wine; therefore, they are no longer "substances." Their empirical reality (along with the words of the institution) has become nothing other than effective signs of Christ's crucified and risen humanity. Thus, to repeat what J. Betz explained about the eucharistic doctrine of Saint John Damascene: the change in their mode of existence *(Dasein)* has also changed the very nature or essence of the eucharistic bread and wine *(So-Sein)*.[8] After the consecration the remaining empirical properties of bread and wine make this new reality known to those who have faith: Christ is present for us as our sacrifice and our spiritual food and drink.[9]

This understanding of transubstantiation does not imply the annihilation of bread and wine but rather elevates them to a transcendent eschatological perfection. The consecrated bread and wine are the true bread and the true wine, "the bread from heaven," and "the cup of eternal salvation," since this true bread is the direct and complete self-communication of Christ to us.

Note the analogy and the difference between incarnation and transubstantiation. Both the humanity of Christ and the consecrated signs of bread and wine directly and completely communicate to us God the Son. Yet the manner of communication is different because the nature of the signs of communication is different. Neither human nature nor the bread and wine are annihilated when elevated to becoming signs of direct and perfect divine self-communication. However, the human "substance" of Christ, actualized in the autonomy of his human freedom, does not cease to exist but is rather perfected in the process. The paradox of the mediation of Christ's humanity is that it provides direct access to God only to the extent that we know and love Jesus the human being. By knowing and loving Jesus the man, we love God the Son and God the Father through the Son.

In contrast, when the bread becomes "true bread" and the wine "true wine," namely the body and blood of Christ, they cease to be substances of ordinary bread and wine. They retain their empirical qualities so that they may become signs of Christ who gives himself to us as our spiritual food and drink. However, we do not love the eucharistic bread and wine in themselves as we do love the man Jesus; the former are only transparent means to lead us to Christ.[10] If the eucharistic elements remained substantially bread and wine while