

THE SACRAMENTS ARE EFFICACIOUS IN  
BRINGING THE RECIPIENT A SPECIAL  
UNION WITH THE MYSTICAL BODY

by Sister Mary Alfreda, S.N.J.M.

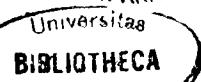
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## INTRODUCTION

The sacraments have a primary importance in the present economy of salvation. It will be the purpose of this thesis to prove this assertion by bringing to the fore one aspect of sacramental theology; namely, the sacraments effect a special union with the Mystical Body through the res et sacramentum.

God created Adam and Eve as perfect beings and raised them to the supernatural order by giving them a share in His divine life.<sup>I</sup> In this state of innocence, our first parents enjoyed intimate friendship with God and shared the secrets of the Blessed Trinity. According to this plan, divine life was to be transmitted to the descendants of Adam along with natural life. Adam and Eve sinned, however, and lost supernatural life for themselves and for the whole human race. Man, a slave of sin and totally incapable of redeeming himself, became estranged from God. God could have left man in this degenerate state, or, by a free act of His will, could have forgiven man and raised him again to the supernatural order. This was not God's eternal plan for the salvation of mankind. This salvation would be effected through the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

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I) Scheeben, M.J., Le Mystère de L'Eglise et de ses Sacraments, tr. by A. Kerkvoorde, O.S.B., Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 1956, p. 108.

When the time for the execution of the eternal plan of God had arrived, the "Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us."<sup>2</sup> A human soul and body, that is a human nature, were hypostatically united to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. In human beings, the human person is the possessor of the nature and the one responsible for the acts; in Christ, the divine Person became possessor of the human nature. By assuming human nature Christ became one with us. The sharing of a common nature with man is the first link which unites Christ to mankind.

The human nature of Christ was the instrument through which He glorified His Father and acquired infinite merits for the salvation of mankind. Every action of Christ, being the action of a divine Person, had infinite value.

The acquiring of merits by Christ was completed with His death on Calvary; the application of these merits to each individual is to continue until the end of time. According to God's plan, the applications of the merits of Christ can be effected only through union with Him, and the chief means instituted by Christ to effect this union with His Mystical Body is the sacraments.

What do we mean by the Mystical Body of Christ? When we speak of the body of Christ, we may use three terms: physical body, glorified body and mystical body. The physical, historical body is the body He had while living on

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2) John, 1; 14.

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this earth and through which He suffered and died. Its existence ended with Christ's death on the Cross. His glorious, risen body began on Resurrection day; it is now in heaven and in every consecrated host, with the difference that in heaven, Christ has the substance and the accidents of His risen body, while in the host, He has only the substance. The mystical body is the person of Christ plus all the human beings united with Him.

The mystical body is neither a natural, physical body, nor a moral body. Pope Pius XII in his encyclical "Mystici Corporis" clearly indicates the difference.

In a natural or physical body the principle of unity so unites the parts that each lacks its own individual subsistence. [...] In a moral body, the principle of union is nothing more than the common end, and the common co-operation of all under authority for the attainment of that end; whereas in the Mystical Body, this collaboration is supplemented by a distinct internal principle, which exists effectively in the whole and in each of its parts, and whose excellence is such, that of itself it is vastly superior to whatever bonds of union may be found in a physical or moral body. This is something, not of the natural but of the supernatural order. Essentially it is something infinite, uncreated: the Spirit of God, who fills and unifies the whole Church.<sup>3</sup>

This Mystical or social Body was conceived at the Baptism of Christ, was built by Christ when He preached His doctrine, was completed when He hung on the Cross and was manifested when He sent the Holy Spirit as paraclete in

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3) Pope Pius XII, Mystici Corporis Christi, (The Mystical Body of Christ), New York, The Paulist Press, p. 20, 21, Nos. 65 and 66.

4

visible form on His disciples. In this Mystical Body, Christ  
is the Head. "And He is head of the body, the Church."<sup>5</sup>  
The Holy Spirit is the soul and we are the members. "Now  
you are the body of Christ, member for member."<sup>6</sup>

How does one become a member of the Mystical Body? Man is linked with Christ by the very fact that Christ shares human nature with the rest of mankind. However, while this link makes possible the incorporation of man into the Mystical Body, it does not raise him to the supernatural order. A new contact must be made through faith. It is an idea dear to St. Thomas that faith establishes a true contact with Christ, a contact which once established could lead to participation of eternal glory.<sup>7</sup> Without this contact through faith, the soul is dead for Christ: divine life passes near it without penetrating it. Faith, therefore, is the first grafting of man on Christ required for all other spiritual fecundity. As long as this contact is not made, Redemption is not yet our Redemption.<sup>8</sup> Faith then plays an instrumental role: it opens the door through which one can have access to union with Christ through charity.

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4) Pope Pius XII, op. cit., p. 9.

5) I Cor., 12; 27.

6) I Cor., 12; 27.

7) Vonier Dom, La Clef de la Doctrine Eucharistique, Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1941, p. 9.

8) Ibid., p. 13.

The sacraments, in turn, constitute a new order of means through which objective union with Christ is effected. The sacraments are external manifestations of faith. They complete the instrumental activity of faith and give it a new efficacy.

The meaning of the word sacramentum, from which the English word sacrament is derived, has undergone several changes since the time of Tertullian. We shall confine ourself to the meaning of the word as applied to Christ, to the Church and to the seven Sacraments recognized by the Church.

## CHAPTER I

## CHRIST and THE CHURCH

1. Christ is a Sacrament

Christ is the Sacrament par excellence, since in Him the supernatural is united to the natural in the most intimate manner by means of the hypostatic union. St. Paul declares to the Colossians that he preaches "the mystery which has been hidden for ages and generations, but now is clearly shown to his saints."<sup>1</sup> To Timothy, he says, "Great is the mystery of godliness: which was manifested in the flesh, <sup>2</sup> g.o.d." In speaking of Christ as a mystery, St. Paul, followed by the Fathers, means not merely a hidden or mysterious thing, but also a sign, a promise, a guarantee, and a cause of human salvation. Christ is the Word made flesh; He is the meaning of God for man, incorporated into human nature; He is the image of God, and likewise the image of man, the second Adam. He is the cause of redeemed humanity. In His incarnate life, He is God's Word made flesh, expressing what He causes and causing what He expresses, that is, the new birth and life of mankind in a supernatural union with God.<sup>3</sup>

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1) Col., 1; 26, 27.

2) I Tim., 3; 16.

3) Leeming, Bernard, The Principles of Sacramental Theology, Westminster, Newman, 1957, p. 350-351.

E. H. Schillebeeckx, O.P., develops this idea at length. Without Christ, there would be no Church and no sacraments, since these are but visible manifestations of the invisible Christ.

a) Christ: Sacrament and Word

In the order of grace established by God, it is in the personal encounter with Him that man finds his salvation. From God's viewpoint, the encounter is revelation; from man's viewpoint, it is religion. Revelation and religion as the mutual encounter of the created historical man with the uncreated God are genuinely sacramental. By sacramental we mean every supernatural, salvific reality that takes place historically in our lives. For it is only in earthly form that we can grasp in space and time the mysteries God has revealed to us.

The dialogue structure of revelation viewed as word and sacrament is already present in the Old Testament. In its history, Israel meets with the reality repeatedly impressed in the prophetic word, "I will be your God, you will be my people." God extends a loving invitation to His people, and it is for them to respond or to refuse. Clearly, then, the revelation that leads to Christ is an historical, salvific dialogue, an existential struggle between the ever-faithful God and man who resists Him.

In the man Jesus, God's fidelity finds at last the perfect human response. In the single person both the

revelation and the answer become the constitutive content of full revelation of God. As the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus reveals to us the divine proposal of love; as man, He accepts it in the name of all of us. Thus His sacrifice on the Cross is at the same time our redemption. Only in union with the man Jesus, who is the Head of mankind, does our own fidelity become possible.

To be addressed personally by the man Jesus is for the believer a personal contact with God, for Jesus is God. Consequently, the interhuman exchange between Jesus and the men with whom He comes in contact is the sacrament of their encounter with God. This inter-human relationship takes place in and through corporal signs. The encounter of the Son of God with His fellowmen demanded a bodily expression. The specifically human operations of Christ remain the personal deeds of the Son of God, even though expressed in human form. As the actions of the Son of God, the actions of Christ possess divine salvific power. This is true especially of those operations of the God-man which, though realized in a human form, are nevertheless specifically operations of God - His miracles, for instance, and above all the redemption itself completed in the sacrifice of the Cross.

b) Christ: Sacrement par Excellence

The operations of Jesus in their human form are "sign and cause" of the divine grace in such a way that the externally palpable is itself the inner power of salvation

to the bestowal of grace. The encounter of the unbeliever with Christ, the primal sacrament, remains the fundamental act of the Christian religion as personal communication with the three Divine Persons.

The body is not only the manifestation of the human person who reveals himself; it is also the medium in which the soul externalizes its personality development. This corporeity becomes a sign of the innermost acts of the person. The mutual encounter of persons takes place in and through the body; although spiritual interchange among men may in itself be quite independent of bodily encounter; nevertheless, it receives its fulfillment precisely in such an encounter.

Now though Christ is true God, He is also true man. In Him, we find the anthropological dimension in His human intercourse with men. For the apostles, the moments of body-soul engagement with Christ were decisive high points in their experience with Him. The man Jesus is the redeeming God. Therefore, His spiritual human action is an action of grace: the sacramental realization of God's will concerning the salvation of mankind. The religious life, consequently, can best reach maturity in the human interchange which is the sacramental encounter with Christ.

Christ, therefore, is a Sacrament, the primary Sacrament, the unique access to the reality of salvation. The encounter with Christ is achieved through the sacrament

of His body.<sup>5</sup>

c) Unity of the World through Christ

The world which was created by God began as a unity and tends towards unity once again, and Christ is the instrument of that unity, not only of all men but of the whole cosmos.

There was unity from all eternity. This is indicated by the unity of God in Three Persons, and that of Christ who participates in the essential unity of the Godhead. The world came from the one God and from the one Lord. "There is only one God, the Father from whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him."<sup>6</sup> And there was one man at the beginning of the human race. The unity which was at the beginning is also the goal, the end of creation. The world was created for Christ who must remain the one Lord and bring about the knitting together of the whole of the cosmos. He is the keystone of the whole structure, and through Christ the world will have its ultimate end in God who is the first and last unity. Christ's work consists in repairing this primitive unity, in restating what had existed in the beginning.

In the theological context of the mystery of Christ, Paul uses the word to recapitulate or re-establish.

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5) Schillebeeckx, E.H., O.P., Le Christ, Sacrement de la Rencontre de Dieu, Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 1960, p. 39-40.

6) I Cor., 8; 6.

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"And this his good pleasure he purposed in him to be dispensed in the fullness of the time: to re-establish all things in Christ, both those in the heavens and those on the earth."<sup>6</sup>

Re-establish here means to restore the lost unity under the headship of Christ: the Church is His body, and the powers are subjected to His rule.<sup>7</sup>

d) Christ Constituted in Power

The glory of God, communicated to Christ, makes Him an image. Christ is the Son of God and the Lord by right, because He is the firstborn. Only by His exaltation at the time of His resurrection and ascension does He receive public acclaim for his title and power over us. It is then that He is the "Son of God in power" and that the name above all names is bestowed on Him. It is at that moment also that He is the image capable of giving us a likeness to God through His risen and glorified body. "But we all, with faces unveiled, reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into his very image from glory to glory, as through the Spirit of the Lord."<sup>8</sup>

The theme Kyrios must be considered attentively since we find in it the meaning of the ecclesiastical sacramentality in its relation with the Lord risen and glorified.

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6) Eph. I; 9-10.

7) Cerfcaux, L. Christ in the Theology of St. Paul, tr. by Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker, St. Louis, Herder, 1958, p. 419.

8) II Cor. 3; 18.

In the Redemption, we must distinguish four elements. First of all, the initiative of the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. This initiative is the Trinitarian background appearing veiled through the temporal economy of salvation. He "through the Holy Spirit offered himself un-<sup>9</sup>blemished unto God." In the second place, there is the human response of Christ to the mission given to Him by the Father. "He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death,<sup>10</sup> even to the death of the cross." In the third place, we see the divine response of the Father to the obedience and humiliation of Jesus. "Therefore God has exalted him and<sup>11</sup> has bestowed upon him the name that is above every name." Also "God has made both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you<sup>12</sup> crucified." Lastly, there is the mission of the Holy Spirit who was sent by the glorified Kyrios. "Thus perfected he became to all who obey him the cause of eternal sal-<sup>13</sup>vation."

Thus it is only through the elevation of Jesus at the right hand of the Father that the power of His Redemption is fully realized. The Ascension is the prelude of the gift of the Holy Spirit and the conclusion of the earthly mission

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9) Heb. 9) 14.

10) Phil. 2; 8.

11) Ibid 2; 9.

12) Acts 2; 36.

13) Heb. 5; 9.

of Jesus. "This Jesus, God has raised up and we are all witnesses of it. Therefore, exalted by the right hand of God and receiving from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit

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he has poured forth his Spirit which you see and hear."

Since Christ is the Head of the new humanity, we also are already, in principle, near the Father. "But God ... raised us up together and seated together in heaven in Jesus Christ."

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In this light, we see that the Incarnation is the life of Christ on earth and its eternal prolongation in the mission of the Holy Spirit. This is the mystery which St. John expresses in these words, "But I speak the truth to you, it is expedient for you that I depart. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I shall send him to you."

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## 2. The Church is a Sacrament

We are now in a better position to understand what the Church is, for all dogmas are bound together. The Church, which is Jesus spread about and communicated, completes - so far as it can be completed here below - the work of special reunion which was made necessary by sin, the work which was begun at the Incarnation and carried on up to

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Calvary.

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14) Acts, 2; 32, 34.

15) Eph., 2; 6-7.

16) John, 16; 7.

17) Lubac de, Henri, Catholicism, London, Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1950, p. 17.

If Christ is a Sacrament, the Church, which is His Mystical Body, is also a sacrament, that is a sign and a cause of salvation.<sup>I8</sup>

The historical Jesus is always inseparable from His community of salvation, the Church, because God constituted Him by vocation the representative of fallen humanity. In and through His earthly life, Jesus established a community, a redeemed people of God. By His death accepted by the Father, He became Head of the Church. St. Augustine says,<sup>I9</sup> "Christ died that His Church be born of His death." The Church on earth is the visible representative of the reality of salvation following the plan of the historical visibility.

#### a) The Church: Sacrament and Word

As the earthly channel of God's revelation, the Church is essentially sacrament and word. Both of these are specific operative sphere of the apostolic office as Christ has fashioned her through the Spirit.

Through the mediation of the Holy Spirit and of the apostolic office of His Church, Christ builds in this world a living temple; for Christ sends the Holy Spirit, but He also sends His apostles. Both missions are organically connected. Pentecost, the day on which the Church is fully revealed in her sacramental and kerygmatic action, is the

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I8) Leeming, Bernard, op.cit., p. 351.

I9) St. Augustine, in Joannis Evangelium, tr. 9, 10, P.L., 35, Vol., 1463.

mysterious manifestation of both missions precisely in the cooperative union - a union whose vitality springs from the common source of Christ-life. Whatever the visible Church performs in the historical order is performed interiorly in the superiors of the Church as well as in the souls of the faithful by the Spirit sent forth by Christ. Therefore the Church may be called a sacrament, inasmuch as she is the sacramental Christ and the recipient of the seven sacraments.

As prolongation of the heavenly Christ, the Church is a sign which causes and signifies the reality of Redemption. Her invisible communion with Christ becomes visible in her redemptive activity.

b) The Church: Pleroma of Christ

The body of Christ, the Church, is the pleroma of Christ; filled with Christ, she can fill the faithful. "And all things he made subject under his feet, and him he gave as head over all the Church, which indeed is his body, the completion of him who fills all with all."<sup>20</sup> The participated "fullness" of Christ is realized in all, and the Church can be thought of as the place in which this fullness is concentrated.

The fullness of Christ floods over the Church and men; just like the Spirit in the Book of Wisdom, it fills

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20) Eph. 1; 23.

the whole world. "He it is who ascended also above all the  
 21  
 heavens that he might fill all things."

c) Social Aspect of the Church

The Church is the exterior manifestation of the grace of salvation under the symbol of a social sign. Today, there is a growing awareness that the life of grace which is produced and maintained by the sacraments is conferred in and through the Church; to quote Henri de Lubac:

Grace does not set up a purely individual relationship between the soul and God or Christ; rather each one receives grace in measure in which he is joined socially to that unique organism in which there flows its own life-giving stream. [...] All the sacraments are essentially sacraments of the Church; in her alone, the society of the Spirit is there normally speaking, a sharing in the gift of the Spirit. 22

To conclude, we say that the Church is not only a means of salvation; it is the salvation of Christ Himself, the corporal form of salvation manifested to the world.

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21) Eph., 1; 23.

22) Lubac de, Henri, Catholicisme, Masure, Semaine Religieuse de Nice, 1954, p. 570.

## CHAPTER 2

## SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

1. Definition

St. Thomas defines sacraments as "signs of a sacred thing."<sup>1</sup> A sacrament is an external of a hidden quality of the soul. The essence of a sacrament is a sign: it is its very definition. St. Augustine defines it as "something which besides the impression it makes on the senses evokes something other than itself."<sup>2</sup> The Council of Trent says that "sacraments are efficacious signs of grace; that is, they contain the grace they signify."<sup>3</sup> The Roman Catechism defines sacrament as "a thing perceptible to the senses, which on the ground of divine institution possesses the power both of effecting and signifying sanctity and righteousness."<sup>4</sup> The common definition found in almost all catechisms is, "Sacraments are outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace."

Most of the definitions quoted above bring out the fact that sacraments are signs efficacious in giving grace, but none indicates that grace is conferred because the

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1) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, IIIa et Suppl., q. 60, a. 4.

2) Quoted by Dom Vonier, in op. cit., p. 28.

3) Clarkson, J., Edwards, J., Kelly, W., Welch, J., The Church Teaches, St. Louis, Herder, 1960, No. 670.

4) Ott, Ludwig, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, tr. by P. Lynch, Cork, The Mercier Press, 1957, p. 346.

sacraments first of all effect a special union with the Mystical Body. As Father Leeming points out, any theory of sacramental efficacy must take into account all the effects of the sacraments, "for that which makes a sacrament efficacious should account for all the results which it causes" and one of these results is the social and incorporative effect. Father Leeming defines sacrament as follows:

A sacrament is a permanent and efficacious sign of Christ uniting the recipient in a special way to his Mystical Body, and thereby expressing his will to give the union of grace to those who place no obstacle. [...] The efficacy of the sacrament flows through the union which they cause with the Mystical Body of Christ.

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This is the definition which will serve as basis for the following discussion.

## 2. Effects

Sacraments may be regarded as the main acts of the Church, the acts she performs with her full power as the continuation of Christ the Sanctifier. Or if we prefer, they are the acts by which the Church fully activates herself as the body of Christ, the body of holiness, the body of grace; or again they are the actions of Christ the Sanctifier living in the Church.

A sacrament is not, in the first instance, an action of God; it is an action of Christ who continues to live on

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5) Leeming, Bernard, S.J., op. cit., p. 346.

6) Ibid., p. 349, 355.

in the Church and who continues His Redemption and His assent toward the Father in His Mystical Body.

The main activity of the Mystical Body, effected through the instrumentality of the sacraments, causes the propagation, preservation and the growth of his body, according to the various aspects and organs through which that activity is exercised.

The first effect of a sacrament is to admit a man into the Church absolutely or to perfect his union with the Church in some particular manner; to confer a state of the Church, a condition, a way of being that is membership or an aspect of such membership.<sup>7</sup>

The sacraments, as parts of the Church's visible and sacramental character, express unity with Christ and cause unity with Christ. In this sense, the sacraments are an extension of the Incarnation since they share in the visibility, the symbolism and effectiveness of Christ and of His Body, the Church. Every sacrament validly administered is effective in bringing the recipient a special union in the supernatural organism and gives grace, if no obstacle is put in the way. The symbolic reality, or res et sacramentum, within him is an invisible part of the organism, and gives him a share in the vitality of the Church, and hence, also,

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7) Mersch, Emile, S.J., The Theology of the Mystical Body, tr. by Cyril Vollert, St. Louis, Herder, 1951, p. 550-552.

in the sanctifying power of the Church, and not in merely  
<sup>8</sup>  
 making him personally holy.

Since sacraments are means of salvation, they should be understood as instruments of sanctity. As they make real, renew, or strengthen man's union with Christ, by that very fact they make real, renew, or strengthen his union with Christian community. The second aspect, the social aspect, is so intimately bound up with the first that it can be said that it is through his union with the community that the Christian is united with Christ.

This is the constant teaching of the Church, though it must be confessed that in practice it is too little known. Just as the redemption and revelation, even though they reach every individual soul, are fundamentally not individual but social, so grace which is produced and maintained <sup>9</sup> is social.

The Church is one with Christ, no matter what may be the actual spiritual state of the members who compose it. Sinners are truly members even though unhealthy members of the Mystical Body, and the symbolic reality, whether character or ornatus, is the formal cause of their union with the Church, and is both real and sacramental.

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8) Leeming, Bernard, op cit., p. 351.

9) Lubac de, Henri, op cit., p. 57.

The sacraments are always efficacious. "A sacrament", says St. Augustine, "is a visible word," and the Fathers of the Church appeal to the power of the word as an illustration of the power of the sacraments. Among theologians, including St. Thomas, this power is generally admitted.<sup>10</sup> Christ's words are effective because they are God's words and form a unity of power with God from whose person the words came as His own expression.<sup>11</sup> God's words are creative. This is manifest in the natural mystery of creation, why not in the supernatural? This explains why the symbolism of the sacraments is not merely transitory, but has a certain permanence. God's words in the enduring symbolism of sacraments, are permanent causes, not merely of knowledge, but of real union with the Mystical Body and, if there is no obex, of grace. The special form of union with the Church is at once the effect of Christ's word spoken transitorily in the rite, and an enduring expression of Christ's will to give grace; it is the symbolic reality or the res et sacramentum. By placing a man in a special position in the Church, Christ eo ipso expresses His will to give all graces needed in that special position.

The heavenly acts of salvation which are invisible for us become visible in the sacraments. The sacraments are

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10) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, I, q. 62, a. 4.

11) Leeming, Bernard, op. cit., p. 353.

earthly prolongation of the acts of the glorified Christ. They are not things, but the encounter of men on earth with the glorified man Jesus, through the means of visible forms. Sacraments are personal acts of the heavenly Christ Himself, in the form of a visible manifestation of a functional act of the Church. "What was invisible in Christ has passed in <sup>12</sup> the sacraments of the Church." The sacraments bridge the distance between the heavenly Christ and humanity not yet glorified. They make possible the reciprocal human encounter between Christ and men.

## 2. Doctrine of the Sacramental Character

The enduring expression of Christ's will to give grace is made manifest in a different manner in each sacrament. In the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, it is indicated by the character.

The doctrine of the character or "seal", as it was called at first, may be traced back to the early centuries of the Church. As early as the second century, the term "seal" was used as a synonym for Baptism. The Shepherd of Hermas, who wrote between 140 and 155, quoted by Iraeneus in Gaul, by Tertullian in Africa, and by Clement and Origen in Alexandria, speaks of the seal as Baptism:

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12) Leo the Great, Sermo 74, 2, P.L., 54, Col., 398.

Before a man has been born in the name of the Son of God, he is dead, but when he has received the seal, he layeth aside his deadness and resumed life. The seal, then, is the water; they go down into the water dead and they come up alive.

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Clement of Alexandria, telling the famous story of the young man whom St. John converted and entrusted to the care of a presbyter, says that the presbyter was most vigilant until "after having enlightened him (i.e. baptized him), he lessened his former care and guard as having given him the perfect guard, the seal of the Lord."<sup>I4</sup> Eusebius, in his life of Constantine, says that Constantine had contemplated "receiving the seal in the Jordan."<sup>I5</sup> And St. Basil speaking of Philip's dealing with the eunuch of Ethiopia remarks that he did not delay the seal, for when they came to water, "Here," he said, "is water, what prevents me from being baptized?"<sup>I6</sup>

The term "seal" used to designate the character is also found in several passages of the New Testament. St. Paul says to the Ephesians, "And in him you too, when you had heard the word of truth, the good news of your salvation, and believed in it, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise."<sup>I7</sup>

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I3) Clement of Alexandria, Apostolic Fathers, London, Lightfoot, 1893, p. 37I.

I4) Ibid, Quis Dives Salvatur, 42, P.G., 9, Col., 649.

I5) Eusebius, 4, 62, P.G., 20, Col., 1216.

I6) St. Basil, Hom in Bapt., 6, P.G., 3I, Col. 437

I7) Eph., I; I3.

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Then he adds, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."<sup>18</sup> To the Corinthians, he writes, "Now it is God who is warrant for us and for you in Christ, who anointed us, who has stamped us with the seal."<sup>19</sup> These texts give clear foundation for the doctrine that sealing or baptizing of the Christian impresses an enduring mark on the soul.

The Fathers before St. Augustine did not clearly distinguish between the seal and the ultimate effects of Baptism, but not one single Father or ecclesiastical writer can be cited as clearly stating that the seal can be lost, while many clearly state that grace may be lost. Many say that the seal is indestructible. There was then in their mind a difference, though not explicitly stated, between the seal and grace.

Up to the year 380, or thereabouts, there had been two broad currents of thought in the Church which seemed to flow in different channels; the one about the seal impressed upon the soul in Christian initiation; the other about the refusal to repeat the sacraments of initiation. It was St. Augustine who first clearly perceived that these two streams really converged. The doctrine of the seal meant that grace was not the sole gift received on becoming a

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18) Eph., 4; 30.

19) II Cor., 1; 21-22.

Christian; the seal was a gift different from grace and this gift explained why Baptism was not repeated. That connection is of the utmost importance in sacramental theology. It is the doctrine of the seal or character which can give a coherent account of the meaning of validity in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. Later Christian thinkers came to see that in all the sacraments there is something comparable to the character, and found in it a principle of universal application to sacraments which can be valid but fruitless of grace.

The Council of Florence defines character as "a certain spiritual sign distinguishing the recipients from others."<sup>20</sup> The Council of Trent defines it as "a kind of indelible spiritual sign."<sup>21</sup> St Thomas says that "the character imprinted on the soul is a kind of sign in so far as it is imprinted by a sensible sacrament[.] anything that assimilates one thing to another or discriminates one from another, even though it be not sensible, can be called a character or a seal."<sup>22</sup>

St. Thomas adds a new dimension to the character by considering all three characters as orientated toward Christian worship. Admittedly the character configures or

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20) Clarkson, op. cit., No. 663.

21) Ibid., No. 673.

22) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 63, a. I, ad 2.

likens the soul to the whole Trinity, as the ~~magistral~~ definition of the day insisted, but in the mind of Thomas, the character assimilates or likens the soul more directly to Christ, and more specifically to Christ in His role as Priest. Finally, this assimilation or likeness is not static but dynamic, since through the character the Christian is deputed to Christian worship, and through participation in the priesthood of Christ, he is given the power, active in Confirmation and Holy Orders, <sup>23</sup> passive in Baptism, to participate in Christian worship. St. Thomas also maintains that the character is in the powers of the soul and gives his reason. "Divine worship consists in certain actions; and the powers of the soul are properly ordained to actions, <sup>24</sup> just as the essence is ordained to existence."

Father Scheeben calls the character "the soul which marks interiorly the members of the God-man, makes them like unto Him in His hypostatic union and gives them a right to <sup>25</sup> His grace in uniting them organically to Him." It is a consecration to Christ, but a consecration which does not affect the sensitive faculties of the soul. The character effects in the Mystical Body what the conformity of members does in a physical body. The sacramental character is the

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23) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 63, a.1, ad 2.

24) Ibid, III, q. 63, a. 4, c.

25) Scheeben, M. J., op. cit., p. 127.

source of the significance of the sacraments and the base of their efficacy. As the res et sacramentum, it is the soul of the external rite. The character of the members is the reflection and the image of the double character, human and divine, of the God-man. Because of the hypostatic union, Jesus is the Anointed One, and the members must participate in this consecration in order to be Christians.

Grace ennobles and elevates our nature and its activities by glorifying and transforming it, but the character ennobles our person by uniting it to Christ and by making it participant in His consecration. For Christ, the hypostatic union was the source whence grace flowed into His humanity; for us, the character is the source whence grace flows into our souls because it unites us to Christ, source of grace, heavenly vine of which we are the branches. The character preserves grace in us and guarantees its possession for all eternity. It gives us the right to participate in the life of Christ as long as we are members and do not forego this right by our sins; it assures us the love of God in such a way that even when we lose grace, He is ever ready to give it back to us.

### 3. Brief History of the Theology of Res et Sacramentum

In order to understand the social aspect of the sacraments, a brief history of the theology of the res et sacramentum is necessary.

The expression sacramentum et res, as it was called then, resulted from Berenger's denial of Christ's true

presence in the Eucharist. Augustine had distinguished between the sacrament of Christ's body and the reality or effect when received. <sup>26</sup> By reality or res, Augustine had in mind the ultimate effect of the Eucharist which is the grace of union with Christ. <sup>27</sup> This reality Berenger readily admitted. For him, the Eucharist was the sign of Christ's body, but he denied the efficacious symbol of spiritual nourishment and union with Christ and the presence of Christ's true body. For him, there were but two elements in the sacrament, the external sign or symbol and the ultimate effect or the grace of spiritual nourishment and <sup>28</sup> charity.

It was then necessary for the theologians to find a third element in the Eucharist which would preserve the symbolism of the Eucharist yet safeguard the reality of Christ's real presence. Tentative solutions were given, but none proved satisfactory. Gradually a definite reply was evolved by Hugh of St. Victor and Peter Lombard in the twelfth century and given official approval by Pope Innocent III in the thirteenth century. According to this theory, a careful distinction must be made between the three different

26) St. Augustine, In Joannis Evangelium, tract 26, 12 and 13, P.L., Col. 1612.

27) Ibid, 25, P.L., 35, Col. 1814.

28) Palmer, Paul F., S.J., "Theology of the Res et Sacramentum with particular emphasis on its application to Penance", in the Catholic Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America, 1959, p. 122.

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elements in this sacrament; namely, the visible form, the truth of the body and the spiritual power. The form is bread and wine, the truth is the body and blood, and the power is unity and charity.

At the time, sacramentum tantum meant the permanent sacrament, but in the course of time when the expression was used for the other sacraments, it meant the sacramental rite.

However, a difficulty arose when the theology was applied to Baptism. In 1231, William of Auxerre stated, "A sacrament is a visible form of invisible grace; but the character is not visible since it is only in the soul and hence it is not a sacrament."<sup>29</sup> An answer had to be found to justify the fact that Augustine referred to the character as a sacrament or sign which distinguishes the Christian from the unbeliever. Several suggestions were offered but none proved satisfactory. Finally, the solution was presented by William of Auxerre himself. He said, "Signum non est sensibile sed intelligibile."<sup>31</sup> St. Thomas accepted and elaborated this distinction when he stated, "The character imprinted on the soul is a kind of sign in so far as it is imprinted by a visible sacrament, since we know that a certain one has received the baptismal character through his

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29) Quoted by Bernard Leeming, in op. cit., p. 245.

30) St. Augustine, De Baptismo contra Donat., I, 4, 5; P.L., 43, Col. 464.

31) Leeming, Bernard, op. cit., p. 245.

being cleansed by the sensible water."<sup>32</sup> In other words, the existence of the character can be proved by establishing the fact of a valid baptism.

Finally, the teaching of the character as disposition or prelude to grace was accepted by all the great scholastic doctors. In fact, it is this aspect of the res et sacramentum as a disposition for grace which explains the all but general conception of the theory of a dispositive causality of the sacraments.

However, except in the case of the sacraments which imprint a character and the Holy Eucharist, one aspect lacking to the theology was that it did not bring out the ecclesiastical aspect of the other sacraments.

During the Protestant reformation, and for years after, theologians did not venture to discuss this theology for fear of playing into the hands of Protestants who regarded the sacraments only as means of bringing a disposition for grace but not grace itself.

Cardinal Billot writing in the early part of this century deplored the fact that so few modern theologians wrote about the res et sacramentum.<sup>33</sup> Cardinal Billot believed that a renewed study of the res et sacramentum would

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32) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 63, a. I, ad 2.

33) Billot, Ludovico, S.J., De Ecclesiae Sacramentis, Romae, 1896, Vol. II, Thesis 6, p. II2.

throw light upon one point of sacramental theology; namely, the manner in which sacraments cause grace. He insisted that the res et sacramentum was a title to grace in the juridical or intentional order. For him, even in the case of those sacraments which imprint a character, it is the accompanying title to grace and not the character itself which sets up the exigency for grace.<sup>34</sup>

Billot failed to stress the ecclesiastical or socio-logical stamp of the sacraments. The sacraments produce a title to grace, but the title is not founded in any new relationship with the Mystical Body of Christ.

The first theologian to stress the ecclesiastical character of all seven sacraments was Matthias Scheeben, writing in the closing decades of the last century. Returning to the original term of res et sacramentum as applied to the Eucharist, Scheeben concludes that "it is only through the body of Christ and our union with it in one Mystical body that its fullness of grace is communicated to us and we share in the divine life."<sup>35</sup> It is this idea of special union with the God-man as Head of the Mystical Body which dominates Scheeben's teaching on the significance of the res et sacramentum. In the sacraments which imprint a character, Scheeben sees a special consecration, an objective

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34) Billot, Ludovico, op. cit., Vol. II, Thesis 6, p. 142.

35) Scheeben, M.J., The Mysteries of Christianity, tr. by C. Vollert, S.J., St. Louis, Herder, 1947, p. 575.

holiness which, with a stroke of theological genius, he likens to the objective sanctity of the humanity of Christ. For Scheeben, the character has its archetype or exemplar in the grace of the hypostatic union by which the humanity of Christ is united through the Word to the whole Trinity, thus setting up an exigency for habitual grace in His soul.<sup>36</sup> Similarly it is through the res et sacramentum of the sacraments that we are united to Christ in and through His Mystical Body, thus setting up an exigency for the special sacramental graces which flow from the Head to the various members. Scheeben refers to the res et sacramentum as a title to grace, but the title is not an entity in the juridical or moral order alone. We are entitled to grace because, being united in a special manner to the God-man as spirit, that is in the divinity and the divine life of the God-man, the basis of a special supernatural title is granted to us for a supernatural end.

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36) Scheeben, M., op. cit., p. 184.

## CHAPTER 3

## A. BAPTISM

The primary effect of Baptism is the imprinting of the character. "Among these sacraments, there are three, baptism, confirmation, and holy orders, which print on the soul an indelible character.<sup>1</sup>

I. Effectsa) New Birth

Baptism is a new birth. This truth is taught by Christ Himself. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh;<sup>2</sup> and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

b) Incorporation

Baptism is an insertion into Christ. Through the character one is incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ. "For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be so in the likeness of his resurrection also."<sup>3</sup>

Baptism is the sacrament of the successive production of the Church; the sacrament by which the Church provides for her own existence and extension; the act by

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1) Clarkson, op. cit., No. 663.

2) Rom., 6; 5.

3) Ibid., 6; 5.

which the Church acquires members and creates Christians. This is essentially a social aspect. "For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, <sup>4</sup> many as they are, form one body, so also is it with Christ." "For all you <sup>5</sup> who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." "For from him the whole body (being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system according to the functioning in due measure of each single part) derives its increase to the building up of itself in <sup>6</sup> love."

The Creeds bring out the same aspect generally by mentioning Baptism after the Church. Thus the Creed of Nicea-Constantinople declares, I believe "in the holy Catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the <sup>7</sup> remission of sins." And the Council of Florence asserts in the decree Pro Armenis, "The first place among all the sacraments is held by holy Baptism, which is the door of the spiritual life; for by it we are made members of Christ and <sup>8</sup> of His body which is the Church."

To unite us to the Church, to make us a member of the ecclesiastical people of God, to place us in a state of

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4) I Cor., I2; I2.

5) Gal., 3; 27.

6) Eph., 4; I5-I6.

7) Clarkson, op. cit., No. 3.

8) Ibid., No. 686. .

belonging to the Church, these are the primary, necessary and essential effects resulting from the character, and the sacrament cannot fail to produce these effects as soon as it is conferred.

c) Assimilation, Consecration, Identification

Baptism produces an assimilation with Christ. To share the same life, the branches must be of the same species as the trunk; the members must be of the same nature as the body. The same principle holds true for the Mystical Body. The Christian must be configured to Christ. The consecration resulting from the character has its special effect; it makes us sharers in the death and resurrection of Christ. The baptized is inserted in the Paschal mystery of the invisible Church and consequently in the eternal Pasch of Christ.

The character confers officially the right, the power and the duty of participating in Christian worship, and to receive the other sacraments.

It identifies the Christian with Christ. "And answering the king will say to them, Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me."<sup>9</sup> This identity goes so far that our bodies and our members become those of Christ. "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?"<sup>10</sup>

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9)Matt., 25; 40.

10) I Cor., 6; 15.

d) Orientation towards the Eucharist

Because every sacrament accomplishes what it expressed, Baptism introduces into the soul a desire for communion - habitual desire or actual desire, as the case may be. In this respect, Baptism may be defined as the sacrament of the communion of desire. Since desire, like a hand stretched out towards the source of heavenly good, snatches already the waters of grace, so also Baptism, as soon as it is received, initiates the recipient to the fruits of the Eucharist. We can also see how sacramental communion comes to ratify Baptism, how abstention from the holy table gives the lie to the baptismal vow, and how the renewal of these vows finds its natural place on the first communion day.

2. Contract

Baptism is a contract between God and man. The Code of Canon Law says:

By Baptism, a human being is established as a person in the Church of Christ, with all the rights and duties of a Christian, except that the right may be curtailed by censure or an obstacle to ecclesiastical communion.

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3. Other Effects

Through Baptism, worthily received, we become sons of the Father, fili in Filio, through the Spirit. In view of the character, God considers the baptized as His own and fills him with His grace. Accordingly, the character is at once a reality, since it establishes an objective bond

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11) Leeming, Bernard, op. cit., p. 359.

between God and the soul; and at the same time a sign of God's grace, since it is the ultimate disposition to grace.

Baptism removes original sin, remits mortal and venial sins and all the temporal punishments due to sin. The theological and moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are infused into the soul, and the Blessed Trinity comes to live therein. The soul becomes partaker of the divine nature.

#### B. CONFIRMATION

Confirmation imprints a character on the soul. This has been the constant teaching of the Church and was proclaimed a dogma of faith by the Council of Trent.<sup>I2</sup>

##### I. Nature of This Character

###### a) Res et Sacramentum

The character is the primary effect of the sacramental rite, the intermediary phase between the rite and grace; therefore the res et sacramentum of the sacrament. It is an effect and a cause: an effect of the visible sacramental sign and a cause or an invisible sign of grace.

The character is indelible. This is why the sacrament cannot be repeated. Those who receive the sacrament in the sin receive the character, but not the grace. Grace is given only when the obstacle is removed. The character, then is the cause of the reviviscence of the sacrament.

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I2) Clarkson, op. cit., No. 663.

2. Effecta) Prophetic Role

Confirmation confers a specific kingly, sacerdotal and prophetic dignity on the Christians; a dignity which passes from the Anointed One to His co-anointed in the Holy Spirit. It extends to us what happened at the baptism of Christ in the Jordan when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and the Father proclaimed Him His beloved Son. Christ, the God-man, was the Son of God at the Incarnation, but He was confirmed in His messianic mission at His baptism in water and the Holy Spirit. So also, the Christian participates in the sonship of Christ at Baptism, but he receives an added dignity making this filiation more active at Confirmation. Those who are confirmed are enrolled in the task of witnessing, a task similar to that confided by Christ to His apostles on the first Pentecost. "And you shall be witness for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth."<sup>I3</sup>

This role of witnessing continues the role of the prophets of the Old Law. Let us recall that the prophet was a man of God completely under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He who is confirmed continues the prophetic function of the Church along with the prophets of the Old Law and especially with Christ Himself, the great Prophet of the

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I3) Acts, I; 8.

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New Law.

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Confirmation makes us real actors in the great history of salvation, history which began with Adam and will continue until the final triumph of Christ. The prerogatives of the royal race, of the sacerdotal race of Levi and of the ancient prophets are bestowed on us by this sacrament. "You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets <sup>15</sup> with Christ Jesus himself as the chief corner stone."

b) Royal Priesthood of the Faithful

We become members of the people of God by Baptism; but we become adults, that is able to fulfill a role in the midst of that people, by Confirmation, the sacrament of maturity and of Christian responsibilities. Sacred Scripture, the Fathers, and especially the liturgy, are unanimous in proclaiming the right of the confirmed to exercise sacerdotal power.

The most important text of Sacred Scripture is that of St. Peter:

You, however, are chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, that you may proclaim the perfections of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. You who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God.

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14) Luykx, B., and Schyven, D., La Confirmation - Doctrine et Pastorale, Bruges, Apostolat Liturgique, 1958, p. 30.

15) Eph., 2; 20.

16) I Pet., 2; 9-10.

The context of the chapter gives the framework in which the text should be interpreted and it is clearly that of Confirmation. Personal holiness leads to community holiness and regeneration through the word of God in view of the role of witness. The two operations are proper to the Holy Spirit and characteristic of Confirmation. The text may be explained in two themes: that of living stones built on the foundation stone which is Christ; that of the temple which is the new people of God capable of offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. Holiness which is the inalienable prerogative of God becomes, under the influence of the Spirit, the particular condition of the people of God. "Or do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own,"<sup>17</sup>

As Christ was anointed priest in the Spirit at His Incarnation to fulfill His redemptive sacerdotal act, "who through the Holy Spirit offered himself unblemished unto God,"<sup>18</sup> so also, Confirmation, sacrament of the same Spirit, makes us participate in the priesthood of Christ, in view of that sacrifice which is His and ours at once and the same time. This is why the prerogatives of the sacerdotal tribe of the Old Law passed to the New Law. It is the whole Christian people who participates in the universal and

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17) I Cor., 6; 19.

18) Heb., 9; 14.

eschatological priesthood. "To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us to be a kingdom, and priests to God his Father - [.]<sup>19</sup>"

The Fathers are not less explicit in their reasoning. According to St. Athanasius, it is only through the Holy Spirit that God communicates His holiness. St. Augustine writes, "As we call them all christs because of the mystical chrism, so also, all are priests by the fact that they are members of the one only Priest."<sup>20</sup>

The liturgy expresses the same truth in the rite of Confirmation. The aspect of unction is the almost elaborate part of the sacramental rite. From the first centuries on, the consignatio or chrismatio was understood as our configuration to Christ, Witness and Priest of the New Covenant.

The Eastern liturgies developed the aspect of unction as long as Christian initiation constituted a whole. This chrismatio post baptismale was considered as the unction of the prophets and priests of the Old Testament handed over to the whole new people of God.

In the Gallican liturgy, the aspect of unction as configuration to Christ was so predominant that the primitive rite of the imposition of hands was almost forgotten and

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19) Apoc., I;6, cf., 5; IO.

20) St. Augustine, Civit. Dei, 20, IO; P.L., 4I.

the unction became practically the whole rite.<sup>21</sup>

c) Strength to Fight the Enemies

What the first Pentecost was for the apostles, Confirmation is for the Christian; it produces the same effects and is administered for the same purpose, that is, to give strength to face the enemy. This is the teaching of some of the Fathers.

St. Bonaventure speaks of Confirmation as "the sacrament of combat" and Tertullian writes, "We anoint the body to fortify the soul."<sup>22</sup> St. Cyril of Jerusalem says, "Just as after His baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit, Jesus went to attack His adversary; so also, after having received the Holy Spirit and the mystical ointment [Confirmation] [...] you should hold firm against evil attack."<sup>23</sup>

St. Thomas writes thus, "In Baptism, man receives power to do those things which pertain to his own salvation, for as much as he lives to himself, whereas in Confirmation, he receives power to do those things which pertain to the spiritual combat with the enemies of faith."<sup>24</sup>

d) Strength for the Apostolate

The unction from which divine strength is derived is the vocation to the apostolate itself; and the seal which

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21) Luykx, B., and Scheyven, D., op. cit., p. 35-37.

22) Tertullian, de ius., Ch. 6; P.L., 2, Col. 805.

23) St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Cat. 20; P.L., Col. 1092.

24) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 72, a. 5.

marks those confirmed with its imprint is seen in the operation of the Holy Spirit by which their mission is authorized.<sup>25</sup>

St. Thomas says that "all the sacraments are protestations of faith. He who is baptized receives the power of testifying to his faith by receiving the other sacraments; so also he who is confirmed receives the power of publicly confessing his faith by words, as it were ex officio."<sup>26</sup> It is in this sense that we should understand the robur ad pugnam. It is not meant for the individual, but for the community. It is through the zeal of those confirmed that the work of salvation is achieved here and now.

"The character of Confirmation", states Father Camelot, "gives an active role in the defense and the propagation of faith; in the defense and propagation of Christian worship, while the character of Baptism gives a passive role."<sup>27</sup>

Father d'Eypreron maintains that Confirmation is given as a help to the apostolate. "Confirmation comes to help the Christian to exercise a salutary influence in the

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25) Prat, Fernand, The Theology of St. Paul, tr. by John L. Stoddard, Westminster, The Newman Press, 1952, p. 262.

26) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 72, a. 5, ad 2.

27) Camelot, P., "Confirmation", in Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, Vol. 38, p. 135.

world."<sup>28</sup> Such also is the opinion of Father P. Graber. "Baptism seems to be directed toward the individual, while Confirmation is aiming at the good of the whole. Its aim is achieved only in the common activity of the community and in the exercise of social virtues."<sup>29</sup>

Confirmation constitutes a real vocation, a call, a choice. It is a kind of ordination on the part of the minister and of profession on the part of the recipient. Just as those who are baptized are chosen by God among many to be incorporated to His Son, so also those who are confirmed are chosen among the Christians to be elevated to special functions relative to the good of the Christian community and the glory of God.

Christian maturity procured by Confirmation means strength for the apostolate, a fuller realization of the responsibilities entailed in Christian living, a factor of eternal youth, and of perpetual renewal in the Church and in her members. It is a dynamic force to build up, in earthly conditions, the eschatological reign of Christ.

To achieve this task, man must be conformed to Christ. Sacraments exist to assimilate the Christians to the Savior. Confirmation configures the Christian to Christ

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28) Epernon d', Faymans, S.J., La Sainte Trinité et les Sacraments, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1949.

29) Graber, P. Le Christ dans ses sacrements, tr. by L. Richard, Paris, Ed. du Vitrail.

under two aspects; participation in the universal power of creation of the Word, and possession of the secret of revealing the love of the Savior to all men under all circumstances.

To effect this renovation, this terra nova, charismatic gifts are needed today as in the beginning of the Church. The Christian engaged in the heroic labor of the building of the Church needs wisdom, prudence, courage, and endurance which come from on High. He needs the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit Himself inspiring and guiding his actions. To conform the one confirmed to the person of the Word, to the creative Word, to the saving Word, is the special task of the Holy Spirit.

Father H. Tardif expresses his opinion as follows:

By Confirmation, we are conformed to Christ in this particular connection which gives us the right to ask for charismatic gifts for ourselves and for others according to the good pleasure of the Holy Spirit, for the good estate and building up of the whole Christ. In this, every member of the community is like Christ, priest, king, prophet, and witness. However, by reason of diversity of gifts, each individual receives from the Holy Spirit his particular role in the community for the welfare of all, <sup>6.3</sup> but all should be witness by their lives.

30

It is this way that the apostles understood the mission of the Spirit on Pentecost. The apostolic mission is already given to the baptized, but the full Messianic

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30) Tardif, H., The Sacraments are Ours, tr. by Dom Aldhelm Dean, London, Challoner, 1956, p. 38.

power is lacking. In and through Confirmation, the charismatic activity of the Spirit in the Church is visibly prolonged in the life of the newly confirmed. The laicus, or the ecclesiastical people, founded on the characters of Baptism and Confirmation, receives the power of witnessing.

We never encounter the Father, we are never united to the Son, except through and in the Spirit. Confirmation, therefore, unites us to the Blessed Trinity in a very specific way. This is expressed by the formula of Confirmation, "I mark you with the sign of the cross, and I confirm you with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

e) Perfection of Baptism

In the physical life, it is evident that a special perfection is attained by the adult, ad perfectam aetatem, and this enables him to act according to the perfection of his human nature. It is not sufficient to be born, one must grow to dull stature. This is also true in the spiritual life. Man must attain spiritual adulthood, and this is the main purpose of Confirmation. Confirmation is the sacrament which gives to the Christian born of God the state of adulthood. This was very evident on the first Pentecost. On that day, the intellect of the Apostles were enlightened and perfected in such a way that they understood what they had been taught. They grasped the inner meaning of the things they had seen and heard. They saw everything in the light of the resurrection, and began to preach Jesus crucified and

risen.

St. Paul writes thus to the Corinthians, "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether slaves or free; and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."<sup>31</sup> These words describe the formation of the Mystical Body: by Baptism, the neophyte is grafted on to Christ, immersed in Christ, incorporated into Christ, then intervenes the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Church, in order to infuse a new life into it; the gift of the Holy Spirit completes the incorporation of Baptism.<sup>32</sup>

Confirmation has always been regarded as the sacramental rite giving a special infusion of the Holy Spirit with a view of perfecting, fortifying, sealing the action of God in the neophyte. It emphasizes, in a very special way, the role which the Holy Spirit plays in the Christian life as a seal of the divine gifts, in whom Christian perfection is realized.<sup>33</sup>

Tradition stresses this aspect of Confirmation. In the middle of the third century, St. Cyprian writes, "The newly baptized receive the Holy Spirit and are marked with

31) I Cor., 12; 13.

32) Prat, Fernand, op. cit., p. 262.

33) Vagaggini, Cyprian, O.S.B., Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy, tr. by Leonard J. Doyle, Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1959, p. 131.

43

34 the sign of divine consummation." St. Ambrose summarizes the whole tradition in these words, "After the regeneration in water, we still need perfection which is realized when, through the prayer of the priest, the Holy Spirit is given."<sup>35</sup>

Most theologians regard Confirmation as the perfection of Baptism. St. Thomas says that it is a participation more perfect in the priesthood and kingship of Christ.<sup>36</sup> What the hypostatic union effected in Christ, the unction of Confirmation does, in a way, in the one confirmed: it anoints him as soldier and as priest like Him and with Him. It makes him participant in His priestly power and mission. This was begun in Baptism, but it is perfected in Confirmation. The Father sees in the one confirmed a more perfect image of His beloved Son. "Through this sacrament," teaches St. Thomas, "we become more like Christ who was full of grace."<sup>37</sup>

If Baptism is a spiritual regeneration unto Christian life, Confirmation is a certain growth into the Mystical Body. "The character of Confirmation is a distinctive sign, not between unbelievers and believers, but

34) St. Cyprian, Epistulus 73, 92; P.I., 3, Col. III 5.

35) St. Ambrose, De Sacramentis, 3, 2, 8; P.L., I6, Col. 434.

36) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 63, a. 3.

37) Ibid, III, q. 72, a. I, ad 4.

between those who are grown spiritually and those of whom  
 it is written: As new-born babes."<sup>38</sup>

According to Father Scheeben, Confirmation is the complement of Baptism. It attaches us still more closely and firmly to the Mystical Body; it confers on us a still higher consecration and permits supernatural grace to flow from Christ to us in greater abundance, if there is no obstacle. In Confirmation, the supernatural consecration of the Christian as an individual member of Christ's body reaches its perfection.<sup>39</sup>

### C. HOLY ORDERS

Before discussing the sacrament of Holy Orders, we should have a general view of the role of priesthood and of sacrifice in the history of salvation.

#### I. Historical Background of Sacrifice and Priesthood in the Old Testament

The idea of sacrifice is seen from the very beginning. Cain and Abel offered sacrifice to God. "Time passed, and Cain brought the Lord an offering out of the crops the land had given him; Abel, too, brought an offering, and his offering was out of the first-born of his flock, with their fat."<sup>40</sup> After the deluge, Noe offered sacrifice to God.

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38) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 72, a. 5, ad I.

39) Scheeben, M., op. cit., p. 572.

40) Gen., 4; 3-4.

45

"Noe built an altar to the Lord, and chose out beasts that were clean and birds that were clean, and made burnt-offerings there."<sup>41</sup>

The first mention of a priest offering sacrifice is that of Melchisedech who "offered bread and wine."<sup>42</sup> During the Exodus, the tribe of Levi was chosen for the priesthood and duly consecrated. "And now, that I may have priests to serve me among the sons of Israel, summon thy brother Aaron, with his sons, [.] And anoint his head with oil; so shall he be consecrated."<sup>43</sup> After the conquest of Canaan, both kings and priests could offer sacrifices. Later on, only priests were allowed to offer sacrifices.

The Old Law priesthood was a natural priesthood with natural victims foreshadowing that of Christ. If the Aaronic priest foreshadowed Christ, he foreshadowed also the imago Christi, that sacramental re-presentation of Christ<sup>44</sup> which was the glory of the Christian priest to be.

## 2. Priesthood of Christ

In the first instant of His Incarnation, Christ offered Himself as an oblation for the sins of men. In adopting human nature, Christ became priest and mediator.

41) Gen., 8; 20.

42) Gen., 14; 20

43) Ex., 28; 1 and 29; 7.

44) Barden William, O.P., "The Sacraments: Holy Orders," in The Furrow, Vol. 7-12, 1956, p. 430.

45) Prat, Fernand, op. cit., p. 367.

In order to be the ambassador and the religious head of humanity, the priest must belong to the human race. It is by virtue of the solidarity which unites us to our common father that the sin of Adam is our sin, and it is by the same bond of solidarity that the justice of Christ is our justice.

Therefore because children have blood and flesh in common, so he might destroy him who had the empire of death, [..] Wherefore it was right that he should in all things be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people.

46

Besides belonging to the human family, the priest must receive a divine call, since there is question of a supernatural function, and God alone can confide such a mission to whom He pleases. "And no man takes the honor to himself; he takes it who is called by God, as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself with the priesthood, but he who spoke to him, Thou art my son, I this day have be-  
47 gotten thee."

This call must be completed by a consecration. Whereas the priests of the Old Testament were anointed by an accidental unction with visible oil, the God-man, Jesus Christ, is substantially and essentially consecrated forever to the divine service by the hypostatic union of His

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46) Heb., 2; I4, and I7 - I8.

47) Heb., 5; 4-5.

humanity with divinity.<sup>48</sup>

The specific function of a priest is to offer sacrifice. "For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore it is necessary that this one also should have something to offer."<sup>49</sup> Christ Himself will be the victim of His sacrifice. His role of victim began with the Incarnation. From the manger to the Cross, the whole development of His life was to be the successive unfolding of His role as victim. On the eve of His death, He said to His apostles, "All of you drink of this; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins."<sup>50</sup> This was not just an announcement. It was the sacrificial offering of Himself - under the appearance of bread and wine - to the Father as the Victim about to shed His blood on the Cross.<sup>51</sup>

On Calvary, Christ does not offer Himself alone, but along with Himself and in Himself He offers the whole human race of which He is the Head and King. On Calvary, the fullness of Christ's priesthood is attained. Sinful man has but to unite himself to the sacrifice of Christ in order to receive the salvation it contains. The visible sacrifice

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48) Fernan, John, J., Theology - a Course for College Students, New York, Georgian Press, 1953, p. 194.

49) Heb., 8; 3.

50) Matt., 26; 28.

51) Mercier, Gérard, Vers le Père par le Christ, Saint-Benoit-du-Lac, Les Moines Benedictins, 1946, p. 104.

of Christ on the Cross finds its completion in the visible acceptance by the Father in the Resurrection and Ascension which are for us the pledge of our restoration to grace and <sup>52</sup> to the Kingdom of God.

### 3. Priesthood of the New Law

The sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated in the Mass. This is the teaching of the Council of Trent. "In the divine sacrifice that is offered in the Mass, the same Christ who offered Himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the Cross is present and is offered in an unbloody <sup>53</sup> manner."

There is but one sacrifice, that of Calvary, and one Priest, Christ. It is Christ who offers the sacrifice of the Mass. It is He who offers Himself on the altar at every Mass. Christ wished that His sacrifice and His priesthood be perpetuated in a visible manner, and so the night before He died, after changing bread and wine into His Body and <sup>54</sup> Blood, He said, "Do this in commemoration of me." The reason for Christ's instituting a human priesthood follows God's ordinary way of dealing with man; that is to act through secondary causes, through human instruments. He made the organization of His Church a reflection and an

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52) Heris, C.V., O.P., The Mystery of Christ, tr. by Denis Fahey, Westminster, Newman Press, 1950, p.130.

53) Clarkson, op. cit., No. 749.

54) Luke, 22; 20.

extension of the divine life of the Trinity itself. He remained Himself with the Holy Spirit as the guide and protector of His Church even to the consummation of the world.<sup>55</sup>

#### 4. Character of Holy Orders

##### a) Configuration to Christ

The constitutive element of the Christian priesthood, that which makes it an abiding reality in the priest, is the sacramental character. It is this that imprints on the soul of the priest an indelible mark of configuration to Christ, thereby conferring on him all the priestly powers of the Word Incarnate. The character of Orders stamps the soul of the priest with the image of Christ, the Priest, to a degree and manner that renders his intellectual faculties living and conscious instrument of Christ's Priesthood. Through him the whole Church is united in all the personal acts of worship and religion performed by the God-man.

##### b) Power to Offer Sacrifice

In virtue of his sacramental character, the priest is another Christ having the power to offer sacrifice. Each of his acts as priest is an act of the Mediator. It is at the Mass that the spiritual power of the priest reaches its highest degree of efficacy and its supreme identification with Christ. At the moment when the priest pronounces, as

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55) Cunnane, Joseph, "The Hierarchical Church," in The Furrow, Vol. 10, No. I, 1959, p. 15.

if in his own name, the very words of Christ, "This is my Body, this is the chalice of my Blood," he ceases to be merely himself and becomes Christ sacramentally present both as sacrifice and as priest. The mere man in him recedes. At the altar there remains only the Word Incarnate in person offering Himself to His Father through the Church.

The sacrificial action of the priest brings about the presence of Christ. The miracle of transubstantiation returns the Victim of Calvary unceasingly in the act of sacrifice. The Mass is the offering of Christ to the Trinity.

It is through the sacramental character that Christ the Victim, Christ in sacrifice, becomes present; but it is also through the character that Christ becomes present as Priest. The priest of the Church "re-presents" Christ, the Priest, and effects His sacramental presence as supreme Pontiff. The minister at the altar speaks and acts in the person of Christ Himself. The role of the priest is purely instrumental.

The priest also acts in the name of the whole Church. In his prayers and in offering sacrifice, the priest addresses God in the name of whole Church, being mediator for the Church before the only Mediator.

c) Power to Sanctify

Besides saying Mass, the priest has the power to administer the sacraments. He is then a man of God and of souls. Two ceremonies at the Mass clearly indicate this twofold aspect of Christian priesthood. One is the action

of consecration, when the priest raises the Victim heavenward to God; the other is at communion, when he approaches the faithful to give them an opportunity to partake of the same Victim. The two powers of the priest are complementary, for the one depends on the other. The power he has over the Mystical Body, which is secondary, is derived from the power he has over the real body of Christ, which is primary. The priest, in other words, sanctifies souls only to offer them to God. Truly, it is the total Christ that God has committed to the priesthood. This is the grand perspective of the economy of grace. It is by the mediatorialship of Christ that the divine life of grace comes from the Trinity to the souls of men, and this life is disseminated through the entire Church by the hands of the priest.

In this work of communicating to men the inmost life of the three Divine Persons, the priest is the instrument of Christ and of the Trinity. It is with the power of Christ and in the name of the Trinity that he speaks and acts when he administers the sacraments. When he baptizes, confirms, absolves, it is always "In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>56</sup>

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56) Philipon, M.M., O.P., The Sacraments in the Christian Life, tr. by John A. Otto, Westminster, The Newman Press, 1955, p. 267-272.

### 5. Priesthood of the Faithful vs. Hierarchical Priesthood

In what sense is lay-people priesthood distinct from the priesthood destined to liturgical worship, and in what sense can it be said to share in that work? The character represents our share in the life of Christ precisely as he is Priest, a share given in different degrees in Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. By his ordination character, a priest has the power to minister in the person of Christ, to perform the liturgy and to hand on its fruits to the rest of the community; but conversely, a layman has, by his Baptismal character, the power to assist at this celebration and to receive its fruits. The difference of degree in which we share in the priesthood of Christ leads us naturally to think of a hierarchy of functions in the Church.<sup>57</sup>

In the exercise of the priesthood, the hierarchical minister acts as representative and as direct and special instrument of Christ. This is what we mean by saying that he acts directly in the person of Christ and not directly in the person of the faithful. He represents the faithful only in as much as he represents directly Christ, Head of the Church, Head of that Body which is inseparable from Him.

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57) Bright, Laurence, O.P., "The Sacraments: V-Order," in The Life, Vol. 13, 1958, p. 222.

Such is the doctrine inculcated by Mediator Dei:

But we deem it necessary to recall that the priest acts for the people only because he represents Jesus Christ, Who is Head of all His members and offers Himself in their stead. Hence he goes to the altar as the minister of Christ but superior to the people. The people, on the other hand, since they in no sense represent the Divine Redeemer and are not a mediator between themselves and God, can in no way possess the sacerdotal power.

58

Among the laity there is no priesthood and sacrifice except in dependence on and union with the hierarchical priesthood, and with the hierarchical priesthood exercised in the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice. In fact, the priesthood of the faithful has for its center this participation in the Mass, a participation which involves dependence on and union with the priest. Thus we read in

Mediator Dei:

But the conclusion that the people offer the Sacrifice with the priest himself is not based on the fact that, being members of the Church no less than the priest himself, they perform a visible liturgical rite; for this is the privilege only of the minister who has been divinely appointed to this office; rather, it is based on the fact that the people unite their hearts in praise, impetration, expiation and thanksgiving with the prayers or intention of the priest, even of the High Priest Himself, so that in the one and same offering of the Victim and according to a visible sacerdotal rite, they may presented to God the Father.

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58) Pope Pius XII, Mediator Dei, Washington, National Catholic Welfare Conference, p. 33, No. 84.

59) Ibid, p. 35, No. 93.

Between the priesthood of the faithful and that of Christ there is an analogy of proportionality and an analogy of attribution. For in both cases the priesthood means power to offer one's own life in witness of God's sovereignty; on the other hand, the priesthood of the faithful depends on that of Christ as on a first analogate, because after Adam's sin no man has had the power to offer himself to God except in reference to the sacrifice of Christ. Finally, between the priesthood of the hierarchy and that of the faithful there is only an analogy of attribution, in as much as the latter is the effect of the former.

#### 6. Power of Order vs. Power of Jurisdiction

The people of God is built up through the sacraments (power of Order) and through the word of God (power of jurisdiction). Thus we link three concepts, namely: Christ is Sacrament and Word; the Church is Sacrament and Word; and Holy Orders is Sacrament and Word.

The functions of the priest as priest and of the bishop as bishop are quite different. The principal function of the priest is to offer sacrifice; his secondary function is to sanctify souls so that they may be united with Christ in the Eucharist; with Christ, the Victim. By his priestly character, he is essentially and immediately deputed to the work of divine worship. He is the man of the Eucharist; he is priest for God.

The bishop, on the other hand, is wholly and inherently dedicated to the work of governing the faithful in

the spiritual realm. His consecration does not imprint a sacramental character on his soul, but bestows on him the hierarchical power to rule as head. While the priest is another Christ in His role as Adorer of the Father and Sanctifier of souls, the bishop is Christ in His role as Teacher and King, conducting the people of God to their eternal happiness. In the Christian community, the bishop is in charge of the common good; he is the head. This is the teaching of St. Thomas. The bishop has the hierarchical role of head, "being so to speak, a prince of the Church:  
<sup>60</sup>  
est quasi princeps in Ecclesia." The episcopacy adds to simple priesthood the power of headship over the Mystical Body.

The bishop receives power to act on Christ's behalf upon His mystical body, that is, upon the Church; but the priest receives no such power in his consecration, although he may have it by commission from the bishop. Consequently, all such things as do not belong to the ordering of the mystical body are not reserved to the bishop, such as the consecration of this sacrament Eucharist. But it belongs to the bishop to deliver, not only to the people, but likewise to priests, such things as serve them in the fulfillment of their respective duties. And because the blessing of the chrism, and of the holy oil, and of the oil of the sick, and other consecrated things, [...] therefore such consecrations are reserved to the bishop as head of the ecclesiastical order.  
<sup>61</sup>

All the functions and powers of the bishop in the Church derive from the basic principle that he is head and

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60) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 63, a. 3,  
 ad 2.

61) Ibid, III, q. 82, a. 1, ad 2.

ruler of the Christian community. He is Christ to his diocese. In order that he might fulfill his office as shepherd of souls, the Son of God allotted to him with abundant liberality and fullness all the powers of His priesthood and kingship. As head of his Church, the bishop sanctifies both priest and faithful by his power to confer orders, teaches the highest truths of Christianity even to those in perfect holiness, and defends the faith against all attacks from heresy and unbelief. By his laws and wise institution, he heads the Christian community to the City of God. To him falls the task of bringing everything in his Church to its perfect fulfillment.

God endowed the bishop with the fullness of the priesthood that he might be the mediator for his people. He is the shepherd of his flock. In addition to his role as priest and pontiff, Christ entrusted a further mission to the bishop, that of guardian of the faith. Like Christ, the bishop is both priest and king. As priest he, like Christ the Priest, sanctifies souls. As king he, like Christ the King, conducts nations to God. Every society needs someone to be its head. In the Church, the bishop is the spiritual head.

To conclude, we say: by the power of Order, the recipient participates in the priesthood of Christ; by the power of jurisdiction, he participates in His kingship and His prophetic role. Through the power of Order, the priest offers the sacrifice of the Mass and sanctifies the faithful

as Christ did. Through the episcopacy, the Church governs and rules as Christ governed and ruled. The missions of the bishop continues the mission of Christ Himself. "As the Father has sent me, I also send you."<sup>62</sup>

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62) John, 20; 22.

## CHAPTER 4

## A. PENANCE

What is the res et sacramentum of the sacrament of Penance? A great deal of research has been done in that field in recent years, and most theologians have come to a common understanding about the nature of the symbolic reality of Penance.

Let us follow the trend of thoughts which has led to the development, or rather the revival, of the theology of the res et sacramentum of the sacrament of Penance.

#### I. Theological Value of Xiberta's Thesis

##### a) His views:

In the thesis which Father P. Bartholomew Xiberta submitted to the approbation of the Gregorian Institute in 1922, he attempted to prove from Sacred Scripture and the writings of the Fathers that the immediate effect of the priest's absolution is reconciliation with the Church.

The thesis was daring since it seemed to play into the hands of non-Catholic historians of penance who had argued that the early penitential discipline of the Church was introduced for the purpose of reconciling the sinner to the Church as an external society. Reconciliation with the Church, they argued, was not reconciliation with God. Xiberta's thesis was also novel, since at the time most theologians were persuaded that the bishop's reconciliation, following the performance of the canonical penance, was not

the sacrament of Penance, but either the lifting of an ex-  
communication in the external form or the grant of an in-  
dulgence.  
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b) Reactions pro and con

Among the theologians who were opposed to this view, we might mention Father d'Ales, Father P. Stoffer and Father E. Esser. Some favored the idea but with some reticence and some points of interrogation, as Father P. Carro, O.P.

Father M. de la Taille, S.J., took the defense of his pupil and tried to clarify the misunderstandings. He brought out the importance of certain precisions which were clearly enunciated in the thesis, but might have been overlooked by some. He upheld the reason for Xiberta's conclusion and later on expounded it in his well-known work on the Eucharist, "The Mystery of Faith".

Then Father B. Poschman took up the challenge. Long before Xiberta's thesis was written, he had been a specialist in the penitential questions. The thesis, alleging that the reconciliation with the Church is the primary effect of absolution, followed his trend of thoughts. In his work, Paenitentia Secunda, which appeared in 1940, he said:

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1) Palmer, Paul, op. cit., p. 132.

We shall have to assert constantly, in the course of our discourse, that the ideas expressed in Xiberta's thesis are correct, and that it is only in following this view point that the doctrine of penitential doctrine of the primitive Church becomes intelligible.

2

All the sacraments are sacraments of the Church.

"They must be understood as instruments of unity," wrote Father H. de Lubac in 1938. By incorporation, restoring or deepening the union of man to Christ, they incorporate, restore or deepen his union with the Christian community. The ideas are so closely connected that we can say as truly that it is through his union with the community that the Christian is united to Christ.

3

Now most of the theologians accept the idea that the communication of all graces is done only through the visible mediation of the Church. That is precisely the definition of sacramentality.

c) Historical Background of the Thesis

Space does not permit us to do justice to the arguments which Xiberta adduces to substantiate his thesis. They begin with the formulas which Christ used in promising and conferring the apostolic ministry of forgiveness.

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2) Quoted by Dumont, O., S.J., "La Réconciliation avec l'Eglise et la Nécessité de l'aveu sacramentel", in Nouvelle Revue Théologique, Vol. 81, p. 579.

3) Lubac de, Henri, op. cit., p. 51.

"Amen I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven."<sup>4</sup> "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."<sup>5</sup> In both instances the action of the Church in loosing or forgiving is prior to God's action of forgiving the sinner. In other words, whom the Church reconciles to herself, God reconciles to Himself. Obviously, God's confirmation of this action of the Church will depend on the penitence of the sinner. But, granted this condition, it appears quite clear that God's reconciliation of the sinner awaits the action of His ministers who act, however, in the name of the Church. Father Xiberta quotes a number of passages from the early Fathers of the Church which stress the priority of ecclesiastical pardon in the drama of divine forgiveness. One passage which he does not cite, but which Father Palmer found, is the one from St. Ephrem, the Syrian, a fourth century doctor of the universal Church. Commenting on Christ's commission to forgive and to retain, St. Ephrem has Christ say:

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4) Matt., 18; 18.

5) John, 20; 23.

Receive a power which will neither leave you nor fail, because your word is guaranteed. Yours I shall not gainsay. If you shall be angry, I too shall be angry: if you shall be reconciled to the sinner I too shall be reconciled. Behold I hang at your side the keys of the kingdom. Open and close it with fairness until I shall come in glory. <sup>6</sup>

This idea of reconciliation with the Church as a pledge or earnestness of reconciliation with God is confirmed by the very terms which the early Church used to express the immediate effect of her ministry of forgiveness. The effect is described as communion or fellowship of the Church; as the fellowship of peace, communio pacis; as the peace of the Church, pax Ecclesiae; and finally, as reconciliation with the Church. It is only when this peace or reconciliation with the Church has been established that there can be question of forgiveness of sins. Thus St. Cyprian in the exegesis of the power of the keys interprets the words "to loose" as meaning to restore to peace and fellowship with the result that "in the peace which has been given, the sinner receives the pledge of life, <sup>7</sup> and the Holy Spirit."

This same idea of peace with the Church as the pledge of the Spirit by whom sins are forgiven is basic to the teaching of St. Augustine:

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6) Quoted by Palmer, P., S.J., In Sacraments and Forgiveness, Westminster, The Newman Press, 1959, p. 82.

7) St. Cyprian, Epistulus 57, I; 55, I3; P.L.3.

The remission of sins, since it cannot be granted except in the Holy Spirit is granted only in that Church which has the Holy Spirit. Outside this body, the Holy Spirit vivifies no one. The charity of the Church which is poured out into our hearts forgives the sins of those who are members of the Church, but it retains the sins of those who are not her members.

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Texts could be multiplied to show that for Augustine, the forgiveness of sins, whether through baptism or penance, is had only through the Spirit who is poured out on those who are united to the Church. Even Father Galtier, who severely censured Xiberta's thesis, unwittingly subscribes to Xiberta's basic premise, when he states:

This effusion of charity or the Holy Spirit into the hearts does not take place where peace or reconciliation is not received from the Church itself. This the firmly founded teaching of St. Augustine and there can be no remission of sin except through the Church.

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#### d) Today's Attitude and Effect

Today, Xiberta's thesis is accepted by most Catholic scholars in the field of penance and sacramental theology, including such names as Poschmann, Karl Rahner, Amann, Schmaus, de Lubac, and Leeming. D'Ales and Galtier are notable exceptions. As a result, we have a better understanding that the real union with Christ is effected through the union with the ecclesiastical community. So the

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8) St. Augustine, Sermo 71, 20, 33; Episl., I85; Joan., tr. I2I, 4.

9) Galtier, De Poenitentia, Tractatus Dogmatico-Historicus, ef. nova, Romae, I950.

penitential act is seen as Baptism as a passage through the death and resurrection of the Savior. Such is the opinion of Bishop Schmaus who says that in the sign of exclusion from the ecclesiastical community and of the reintegration into it, we see a participation in the judgment of the death of Christ and in the grace of His resurrection.

In fact, reconciliation and pardon are not two juridical separate acts: the divine forgiveness is contained in the reconciliation with the Church, and this reconciliation, this pax cum Ecclesia, is itself mediator of forgiveness: it is the common bond where the visibility of the sign and the invisibility of the mystery of grace coincide.

Rahner speaks in the same way by stating that it is giving peace to the sinner, in assuring him that she restores him in her love in the Spirit, that the Church gives him peace with God.

Schillebeeckx adds, "The ecclesiastical effect of penance is reconciliation with the Church as a sacrament of our reconciliation with God through Christ."<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Analysis of the Res et Sacramentum of Penance

### a) In fieri versus in facto

To explain the permanent character of the reconciliation with the Church, it is necessary to distinguish

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10) Schillebeeckx, E.H., op. cit., p. 168.

between the act of reconciling and the state of reconciliation, between what might be called reconciliation in fieri and the reconciliation in facto. Reconciliation in fieri is the sacramental sign, and it is identified principally with the absolving action of the priest. Reconciliation in facto is the res et sacramentum, and it implies a bond of restored friendship with the Church, a relationship which remains as long as serious sin does not sever the bond, or venial sin does not strain the relationship. Since this bond or relationship is the effect of the sacramental rite, we should regard the bond itself as having the same ontological reality as the sacramental character. Incorporation into the Church and restoration to the Church are both the effect of the Spirit not as yet indwelling but as forging the bond of relationship with the Church in which the Spirit dwells and in which the charity of the spirit is poured out on those who are her members.

b) How Reconciliation is a Sign

Granted that reconciliation with the Church is a reality in the physical order, in what sense is it a sacrament or a sign? As already noted, William of Auxerre and St. Thomas defended the propriety of referring to the sacramental character as a sacrament on the ground that the character could be known even though not seen. In other words, the character is signum intelligibile and not a signum visibile. Similarly, reconciliation with the Church can be known by establishing the fact that the penitent has

been absolved by a duly authorized minister of the Church a fact which was more easily established in the early Church when reconciliation was public. Furthermore, since the reconciled penitent enjoys the privilege of approaching the Eucharist, the sacrament of Christian unity, we can say that in the penitent's reception of the Eucharist, the bond of friendship with the Church is manifested visibly.

c) Bond Prior to Grace

All admit that the sacramental character is prior to grace not only in nature, but, occasionally, even in time. Thus one who receives the sacrament of Baptism validly, but unworthily, is incorporated into the Church, but does not receive the grace of justification. Unless we extend the principle of reviviscence to the sacrament of penance, and not all authors do so, it is difficult to see how reconciliation with the Church is any sense prior to grace. In fact, how can we speak of a bond of restored friendship with the Church unless the bond itself is the effect of the grace of charity? Yet the New Testament formulas for the forgiveness of sins and the passages cited from Ephrem, Cyprian, and Augustine seem to suggest, if not to express quite definitely, that peace with the Church is in some prior to God's act of purifying the sinner. To quote Cyprian again, "In the peace which has been given, the sinners receive the pledge of life, and in the peace which has been received, they receive the Holy Spirit." To

conclude, we add the following quotation from St. Augustine,  
 "The city of God by receiving sinners makes them innocent."<sup>11</sup>

d) Priority Explained

How can we explain this priority? Two explanations are possible. The first is implicit in what we have already said of the action of the Spirit in reconciling the penitent with the Church, an action which is different from the operation of the indwelling Spirit, through whom we are justified, but an action which prepares for justification. Thus reconciliation with the Church is by nature prior to grace since it is the ultimate disposition for the grace of the indwelling Spirit.

A second explanation is prompted by St. Thomas' theory of reciprocal priority and posteriority in the conversion of the sinner. According to St. Thomas, interior penance or contrition is the ultimate disposition for the grace of forgiveness, but interior penance by which the sinner turns from sins and turns to God must be informed by charity. Thus, in the order of dispositive causality, contrition is prior to grace, but in the order of efficient and formal causality, contrition is the effect of grace.<sup>12</sup>

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11) Quoted by P. Palmer, in op. cit., p. 137.

12) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, I-II, q. 113, a. 8, ad 2.

Accordingly, reconciliation with the Church is the ultimate disposition for the grace of charity, and yet it is the effect of the grace of charity. In the order of efficient and formal causality, reconciliation is posterior to grace.

e) Assimilation with Christ

Now we can inquire in what manner such reconciliation is a signum configurativum or an assimilation of the penitent to Christ. St. Thomas limits the assimilation to sacraments which imprint a character. However, St. Albert the Great believed that all sacraments configure us to Christ our Head. According to Albert, penance configures the soul to the suffering Christ. In truth, all the faithful have the obligation to suffer with Christ. "And what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ I fill up in my flesh for his body, which is the Church."<sup>I3</sup>

It is understandable why the reconciled penitent is deputed in a special way to atone for the injury he has done to that Body. And it is precisely in submitting to the penance imposed by the Church through the ministry of her priests that we are, as the Council of Trent asserts "made like to Christ who satisfied for our sins."<sup>I4</sup> It is precisely because there can be no return to the grace of God without a return to the communion of the Church that the intervention

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I3) Col., I; 24.

I4) Clarkson, op. cit., No. 797.

of a minister is normally required. Only the whole Christ,  
 the Head and His Body, Christ with the Church, can remit  
<sup>15</sup>  
<sup>16</sup> sins.

### B. EXTREME UNCTION

#### I. Res et Sacramentum of Extreme Unction

What is the res et sacramentum of this sacrament? Does the sacrament produce an effect when received in the state of sin, or in other words, can the sacrament be valid but not licit? The answer is possible.

#### 2.. Theological Opinions

Cardinal Billot maintains that Extreme Unction may cause an effect independently of grace, when the latter cannot be conferred because of an obex; that this effect can cause reviviscence of the sacrament when the obstacle is removed; and that it lasts as long as the sickness and the danger of death lasts.

It is the teaching of St. Thomas and of nearly all the theologians, and of the Church, that Extreme Unction cannot be repeated during the same danger of death through sickness. Why? The common opinion is that the effects of the sacrament lasts as long as the danger of death exists.

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15) Lubac de, Henri, Catholicism, London, Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1950, p. 62.

16) Palmer, Paul, op. cit., p. 132-141.

Why does it last? Most of the modern theologians admit that there is a temporary effect independent of grace. Some consider it as certain, i.e., Gehr; others, as probable, i.e., Noldin. They believe that the sacrament may revive when the obstacle is removed. Since we cannot administer this sacrament more than once during the same sickness, it seems not in keeping with the goodness of God and the aim of this sacrament, that the sick be deprived of the help they need, because of the lack of sufficient contrition at the time of its reception.

Father Paul Palmer says that for him the res et sacramentum of Extreme Unction is a special bond with the Church as comforter and healer, in so far as the Church continues Christ's ministry of comforting and healing the sick. He sees in Extreme Unction a configuration of the soul similar to that of Confirmation, which is strengthening, rather than with Baptism which symbolizes death and resurrection with and in Christ.

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### 3. Properties of Effect

- a) Temporary - It is not indelible since it ceases with the danger of death and the sacrament can be renewed if the person falls sick again.
- b) Results - This mark does not enable one to perform a sacred duty but is given as a remedy. It resembles the matrimonial bond which is a moral entity.

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17) Palmer, Paul, op. cit., p. 130.

c) Nature - St. Thomas says that the res et sacramentum of this sacrament is not a character, but a certain interior <sup>18</sup> devotion which is a spiritual unction. In the name of Christ and the Church, the priest marks the soul of the sick with a spiritual unction. This is a supernatural mark symbolized and effected by the sacramental sign. Because of this mark, the merciful and compassionate heart of the Father helps the sick spiritually and corporally, and if there is sorrow for sins, He forgives his sins, remits some or all the temporal punishments, and bestows abundant graces.

In the liturgy, all unctions consecrate, set apart, and reserve a person or thing for God alone. Extreme Unction sets the patient apart and places him among those upon whom the Father looks with tenderness. The patient is marked not for death, but for life. His sufferings, sacrifices and immolations unite him and assimilate him in a more perfect manner to Christ on Calvary; nailed to the cross with Christ and like Christ, he realizes the symbolism of his Baptism.

Billot says that the purpose of Extreme Unction is to entrust the sick person to the mercy of God and to obtain from Him grace or relief from pain and remission of sins.

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18) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, q. 30, a. 3, ad 3.

The prayer of the liturgy for this sacrament is not declarative but deprecative, "Per suam misericordiam, indulgeat tibi [.]" This prayer by the minister of Christ and the Church confers on the sick a title to the mercy and divine help during the time of sickness. In this sense, it is a mark which distinguishes him from the others without however conferring any new power.

#### 1. Controversies in Regard this Sacrament

For Schmaus, Extreme Unction is basically the sacramental consecration of death. To establish his point, Schmaus quotes liberally from the prayer commanding a departing soul, but fails to cite the liturgy of the sacrament, which has no reference to death, but which asks instead for the recovery of perfect health of soul, of mind and of body. Actually, if we may judge from the liturgy, the sacrament which consecrates the Christian's death is not Extreme Unction, but Viaticum which can be given to all who are faced with death.

A number of popular writers have gone beyond Schmaus in the discussion of the sacrament of unction of the sick. They maintain that it is not only anointing for death, but anointing for glory. This idea of unction as an anointing for glory is well founded in the teaching of the early scholastics who regarded the purpose of unction as immediate preparation of the soul for the beatific vision. In fact, St. Albert the Great who regards all the sacraments as configuration to Christ either in His suffering or in

His resurrection concludes that "by Extreme Unction, Christians, about to leave this world, are as a prefiguration of the anointed that is the glory to come, when the elect will be delivered from all mortality."<sup>19</sup>

Father Paul Palmer disagrees with these views and maintains that the sacrament of Extreme Unction is not so much to prepare the Christian for death as to comfort, to strengthen him and to restore him to the Church.<sup>20</sup>

Father De Letter believes that Extreme Unction is the sacrament of the sick in danger of death. It is meant for the sick, not only when they are at the point of death, but also during illness which leads to death's door. To enable a sick man, in spite of weakness and spiritual danger, to go safely through the ordeal of the last struggle of this earthly life is the specific sacramental grace of Extreme Unction.<sup>21</sup>

According to Father Kern, the end or purpose of the sacrament is the soul's perfect spiritual health with the immediate entrance into glory. Many theologians contradict this view, but all agree that Extreme Unction provides the help necessary in order to die in the state of grace. The

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19) Quoted by Robillard, J., O.P., in Initiation Théologique, Paris, 1954, p. 639.

20) Palmer, Paul, "The Purpose of Anointed the Sick; a Reappraisal", in Theological Studies, Vol. 10, 1958, p. 309-344.

21) Letter de, P., S.J., "The Meaning of Extreme Unction", in Theology Digest, Vol. 3-4, 1955-56, p. 136, 188.

degree of grace bestowed depends on the dispositions of the recipient as is the case for the other sacraments. The idea that Extreme Unction is the sacrament meant to save from purgatory appears without foundation. The sacrament does not aim directly at the next life but at our present life while we are soul-in-bodies.

Father Davis agrees with Father de Letter. He says that a deep and fundamental error is at the root of the idea that Extreme Unction is to prepare for the next life. On the contrary, sacraments have in view our present life on earth where we are soul - in - bodies. Their result for the future life is evidently only an effect of the specific fruit in our souls during lifetime. It is wrong to reason to the specific purpose of a sacrament from the ultimate effect in the next world. The reverse procedure is the right one and Extreme Unction is no exception to the rule.

The effect of this sacrament is the strengthening of the whole person. What are the needs of a sick person? There result from sickness, weakness, unfitness, a lack of vigour in regard to supernatural life. This is a spiritual matter, but it is also bound up with the physiological state of the person. This is the sacrament of sickness, not of death.

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22) Davis, Charles, "The Sacrament of the Sick", in The Clergy Review, Vol. 43, 1953, p. 736-44.

## C. MATRIMONY

The res et sacramentum of this sacrament lies in the natural bond or matrimonial contract raised to the dignity of a sacrament.

That Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament is formally taught by the Church. The Council of Trent says:

If anyone says that matrimony is not truly and properly one of the seven sacraments of the law of the gospel, and says that it was not instituted by Christ but introduced into the Church by men, and that it does not confer grace; let him be anathema.

<sup>23</sup>  
The mystery of Christ and the mystery of His work of redemption could not be better expressed in human thoughts than by the notion of the Covenant made with the people of God in the Old Testament and the nuptial union of the Son with the Church in the New Testament.

1. God's Love for His People in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, God appears as a jealous God, a God claiming the exclusive love of a bridegroom for His bride. The prophet Isaias, prophesying the mission of Christ to whom all nations shall be converted, says, "And <sup>24</sup> the bridegroom shall rejoice over the bride." To encourage the people during the captivity, Jeremias promises deliverance and many blessings, especially the coming of

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23) Clarkson, op. cit., No. 857.

24) Is., 62; 5.

Christ in those terms, "The voice of joy and the voices of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of them that shall say: Give ye glory to the Lord of hosts; for the Lord is good, his mercy endureth forever."<sup>25</sup> In the Canticle of Canticles, we read of the love of the bridegroom for his bride, "Behold thou art all fair, O my love, behold thou art all fair."<sup>26</sup> And the bride hearing the voice of her beloved exclaims, "Behold, my beloved speaketh to me; Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one."<sup>27</sup>

The refusal of this exclusive love is called a sin of adultery or prostitution. "If anyone betakes himself to sorcerers and wizards, on him too my ban shall rest for prostituting himself to such acts, and I will rid my people of him."<sup>28</sup> "And now treacherous Juda, unabashed, went off in her turn to play the wanton. So wayward, so wanton, she defiled all that land of hers, giving herself to lovers made of wood and stone!"<sup>29</sup> "Blame her, blame your mother, that she is no true wife of mine, nor I any longer her Lord."<sup>30</sup>

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25) Jer., 33; 11, cf. Ps., 38; 6.

26) Cant. of Cant., 1; 14.

27) Ibid, 2; 10.

28) Ibid, 5; 8.

29) Lev., 20; 6.

30) Osee, 2; 2.

## 2. Christ's Love for the Church

Since the coming of Christ, the chosen people is the Church, the Bride of Christ. The whole mystery of the Incarnation is the history of Christ's betrothal on earth of the mystical union of the Son of God with humanity, union <sup>26</sup> which will be completed only in heaven.

The preaching of Christ is described by John the Baptist and by Christ Himself as a time of betrothal. "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices exceedingly <sup>27</sup> at the voice of the bridegroom." Christ compares His mission to a marriage. "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; <sup>28</sup> come to the marriage feast." He acquires the Church with His own blood. "Take heed <sup>29</sup> to rule the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood." He nourishes and cherishes His bride, and with her he constitutes one flesh. "For although you have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers. For in Jesus Christ, through <sup>30</sup> the gospel, did I beget you."

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26) Lestapis de, S., Amour et Institution Familiale, Paris, Editions Spes, 1947, p. 31.

27) John, 3; 29.

28) Luke, 12; 35-36.

29) Acts, 20; 29.

30) I Cor., 4; 16.

When we examine Tradition, we find that the testimonies contained in Scripture have already been elaborated and amplified in various ways. First of all, the Incarnation of the Son is itself considered a nuptial union between the divine nature and the human nature. The Scriptural foundation for this is Psalm 18. "In these, he was made a pavilion for the sun, which comes out as a bridegroom comes from his bed, and exults like some runner who sees the track before him."<sup>32</sup>

St. Gregory the Great formulates the mystery as follows:

God the Father made His Son's marriage when He joined Him to human nature in the womb of the Virgin [.] But because we know this conjunction ordinarily as two persons, God forbid our believing that our God and Redeemer Jesus Christ was made a union of two persons [.] Let us say freely and safely that the Father made the marriage of His Son the King in this: that through the mystery of the Incarnation, He joined the holy Church to Him.

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St. Augustine speaks thus, "The Word is the Spouse, and the Spouse is human nature, and both form but one Son of Man. In the womb of the Virgin, He became Head of the Church, and He came forth as the spouse comes forth from the nuptial chamber, according to Sacred Scripture."<sup>34</sup>

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32) Ps., 18; 6.

33) St. Gregory the Great, Hom. in Evang. 2. Hom. 38, 3; P.L., 76, Col. 1283.

34) St. Augustine, in Joannem, 8, 4; P.L., Col.

If this is true of human nature in general, it is especially true of believers, as the Apostle says, " [...] we hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers."<sup>35</sup> Therefore, in the womb of His most chaste Mother, Christ took to Himself flesh and joined to Himself a spiritual body, namely the body closely knit together of those who were to believe in Him.

3. Christian Marriage - an Image of Christ's Love for the Church

In his Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle gives us the whole theme of the love of Christ for his Church compared to conjugal love.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, cleansing her in the bath of water by means of the word; in order that he might present to himself the Church in all her glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish. Even thus ought husbands also to love their wives as their bodies. He who loves his own wife, loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh; on the contrary he nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ also does the Church (because we are members of his body, made from his flesh and from his bones). [...] This is a great mystery - I mean in reference to Christ and to the Church. However, let each one of you also love his wife just as he loves himself; and let the wife respect her husband.

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35) I Tim., 4; 10.

36) Eph., 5; 25-33.

In the beginning, God created human beings, male and female: Adam and Eve - Christ and the Church. In other words, from eternity, God willed the salvation of mankind through Christ and His bride the Church. When the time had come, Christ left His Father, the heavenly Father and His mother, i.e. either heavenly Jerusalem or His carnal mother, the Synagogue, in order to cleave to His Bride. Divine nature became united to human nature in one divine Person. So also, when he reaches maturity, "man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh."<sup>37</sup>

The Church "was born from the side of our Savior, on the Cross, like a new Eve, mother of all living."<sup>38</sup> The first Eve was made from one of Adam's ribs.<sup>39</sup>

Christ and the Church are joined in nuptial union through the Spirit, who is the love of the Father and the Son given to each other. Matrimony was instituted "by God, the Author of nature, and by Christ our Lord by whom nature was redeemed,"<sup>40</sup> and who raised it to the dignity of a sacrament. Matrimony includes much more than the union of

37) Gen., 2; 24.

38) Pope Pius XII, op. cit., p. 9, No. 29.

39) Gen., 2; 21, 23.

40) Pope Pius XI, Casti Connubii, New York, The Paulist Press, p. 2, No. 5.

bodies. Pope Pius XI says:

By matrimony, the souls of the contracting parties are joined and knit together more directly and more intimately than are their bodies, and that not by any passing affection of sense or spirit, but by a deliberate and firm act of the will; and from this union of souls by God's decree, a sacred inviolable bond arises.

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While matrimony binds them on a natural level, the Spirit, living in their souls, binds them supernaturally to each other and to the Blessed Trinity. The purpose of the sacrament of marriage is not only to deify the lives of the spouses but to deify their union. Through the sacrament, God becomes a part of their conjugal union. The spouses are united in Christ because they have in their soul a principle <sup>42</sup> of unity which is a divine action.

On receiving the Spirit of Christ, the Church receives the divine seed by which she is able to procreate children for Christ. She incorporates them unto herself by Baptism, she conjoins them with Christ, she nourishes them with the bread of life that may be joined more closely <sup>43</sup> with one another and with Christ. So also the procreation of children is the primary purpose of marriage. "And God pronounced his blessing on him. Increase and multiply and

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41) Pope Pius XII, op. cit., p. 3, No. 7.

42) Leclercq, Jacques, Le Mariage Chrétien, Paris, Casterman, 1947, p. 32-33.

43) Tromp, Sébastien, Corpus Christi Quod Est Ecclesia, tr. by Ann Condit, New York, Vantage Press, 1960, p. 41.

fill the earth, and make it yours." <sup>44</sup>

Christian parents must understand that they are destined not only to propagate and preserve the human race on earth; indeed, not only to educate any kind of worshipers of the true God, but children who are to become members of the Church of Christ, to raise up fellow citizens of the saints and members of God's household, so that the worshipers of God and the Savior may daily increase. Christian spouses are incorporated in the Church in a specific manner: <sup>45</sup> they form a living organ of the Mystical Body of Christ.

#### 4. Res et Sacramentum of Matrimony

In his treatise on marriage, St. Thomas states:

In this sacrament also three things are to be found: the acts externally apparent are the sacrament only; the bond between husband and wife resulting from those acts is reality and sacrament; and the ultimate reality contained is the effect of this sacrament, while the non-contained reality is which the Master assigns. <sup>46</sup>

Then he continues:

Just as the water of Baptism together with the form of words results immediately not in the infusion of grace, but the imprinting of the character, so the outward acts and the words expressive of consent directly effects a certain tie which is the sacrament of matrimony; and this tie by virtue of its divine institution works dispository to the infusion of grace. <sup>47</sup>

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44) Gen., I; 28.

45) Anciaux, Paul, Le Sacrement du Mariage, Paris, Beatrice-Nauwelserts, 1961, p. 31.

46) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, q. 42, a. I, ad 5.

47) Ibid, III, Suppl., q. 42, a. 3, ad 2.

The marriage bond is the principle or cause of grace; it serves as an intermediary, supernaturally efficacious, between grace and the sign. It calls for grace and produces it if the recipient puts no obstacle. When this condition is lacking, its divine efficacy is temporarily inactive; but the bond remains and will become active when the obstacle is removed. The bond remains in the soul as a root, and is always capable, at the proper moment, of producing a luxuriant vegetation of grace. It contains the right, precious for the spouses, of receiving from heaven, whenever they need it, the appropriate help to protect, sustain and intensify the union between themselves and with Christ. It is a bond endowed with the divine power of defending itself against all attacks.

#### 5. Bond Compared to Character

Like the character, the bond is the first and fundamental effect of the sacrament of matrimony. It can be effected without grace, because it is not incompatible with attachment to sin; it does not unite directly to God as grace does. It is a principle of reviviscence of the sacrament. It does not vary; it is equal in all and is not capable of degrees.

The bond of matrimony is a consecration. Christian marriage is more than an image of the mysterious union between Christ and the Church; it is an organ of this union; an organ which has to cooperate with Christ for the attainment of its supernatural end. Man in his act of

procreation resembles the Trinity because the Trinity is  
 an infinite and eternal generation and procession.<sup>48</sup> The  
 consecration is more than a moral relationship. It is  
 bound up with a real, supernatural sign which really as-  
 similates and unites the couple in a supernatural manner.  
 Matrimony is not so much the consecration of one person as  
 a consecrated union of two persons. It receives its proper  
 characteristic seal in its consummation.

The marriage bond effects its own specific bond of incorporation in the death of Christ. Baptism is not the only sacrament whereby we are "buried together with Christ." Matrimony also effects a planting together in the likeness of His death, a special incorporation in the mystical marriage consummated on Calvary. The marriage of the baptized is incorporated in the love which binds Christ to His Church, through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the effective cause of all unions. It is the Holy Spirit who binds the Father and Son in the Trinity; God the Son and human nature in the Incarnation; Christ and the Church in the Mystical Body; husband and wife in the great mystery of marriage.

The marriage bond differs from the character in that it is moral entity. The power conferred by matrimony is related to corporal acts, while the character confers

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48) Handren Walter, J., S.J., No Longer Two, Westminster, Newman Press, 1955, p. 36.

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powers related to spiritual acts. It does not imprint an  
indelible or a spiritual mark on the soul.

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49) Cuttaz, F., L'Amour-Sacrement, Belley, du Buhey,  
1960, p. 34.

## CHAPTER 5

## HOLY EUCHARIST

I. Sacramental Structure of the Eucharist

The Eucharist may be considered under two aspects as a sacrament and as a sacrifice; that is, under its static form: real presence and communion; and under its dynamic form; sacrifice of the Mass. In other words, the Eucharist may be considered in facto esse and in fieri. The two aspects are ordinarily studied separately and this leads to a misunderstanding of the sacrament. Holy Communion is not only the reception of the Body of Christ present under the species of bread and wine; it is participation in the sacrifice since the bread and wine contain Christ, the Victim. Jesus did not institute a sacrament which He afterwards used for a sacrifice. The sacrifice is first; it permeates the whole sacrament. The Mass is a sacramental sacrifice, which means that Christ offered Himself as a Victim under the form of a sacrament. He offered Himself under the visible form of bread and wine.

2. Res et Sacramentum of the Eucharist

The relation between sacrament and sacrifice can be understood only in the light of the three phases of a sacrament, namely: sacramentum tantum, res et sacramentum and res tantum.

The sensible element of the Eucharist consists of the species and the words of consecration which is the

sacramentum tantum. This causes and signifies the Body and Blood of Christ, the invisible sacrament, or the res et sacramentum. This, in turn, causes and signifies grace or the res tantum. This grace comprises unity with the Mystical Body, the Head with the members.

These three categories do not follow chronologically but only in the order of causality and in the order of sign which is an order of knowledge. Sometimes they are separated because of an obstacle to grace, but that is not the normal case. When a sacrament is worthily and licitly received, the three categories exist simultaneously, though they are perceived successively. The sacramentum tantum alone is perceptible to the senses; faith discovers the res et sacramentum which leads to the res tantum. It is an order of signification rather than of production. The sign is necessarily known before the effect is produced. It is correct to say, "The Eucharist is the sacrament of bread and wine" and "The Eucharist is the sacrifice of Christ", provided we keep in mind that the Eucharist is the sacrament of bread and wine because bread and wine and the words of consecration are the sacramentum tantum which reveals the res et sacramentum.

a) The real presence and the sacrifice of Christ - res et sacramentum - are effected and manifested in the Eucharist through the consecrated species.

In order to understand this, we must explain a difficult point. In other sacraments, the sacramentum

tantum effects the res et sacramentum which did not exist previously. Baptism produces a character which is new; marriage produces a bond which is a new reality. How can it be said that the Eucharist rite produces the Body of Christ when His Body is already existence? The sacramental sign does not realize the existence of the Body of Christ absolutely speaking; it realizes the existence of the Body of Christ here, under these species. The sacramental words do not create the Body of Christ, but they transubstantiate bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Not only does the sacramental sign produce the Body of Christ, but it preserves it. This is not true for the other sacraments. Their existence is only temporary; it lasts only as long as the rite lasts. This is due to the fact that the other sacraments aim at a fieri, while the Eucharist aims at an esse. The words of consecration are not: "Let this become my Body," but "This is my Body." One of the reasons for the excellence of the Eucharist is that the res et sacramentum exists in the matter as soon as the words of consecration are pronounced, while in the other sacraments it exists in the subject. We do not speak accurately of the Eucharist if we present it as the sacrament of the real presence, or as the sacrament of the sacrifice of Christ, forgetting that this sacrament is always designated

as the sacrament of the bread and wine.<sup>I</sup>

b) The res tantum is not signified directly by the species and the words of consecration, but only by the res et sacramentum.

The causality proceeds conformably to the signification since it is distinctive of sacraments to accomplish what they signify, in fact to accomplish by signifying it. Then the exterior rite, constituted by the union of the form with the species, produces by transubstantiation the Body of Christ which has for effect the building up, member by member, of the universality of the Church.

From this process, then, must be excluded all immediate causality of the sacramental species in relation to the Church. It is not the multiplicity of the grains of wheat or of the grapes blended into unity which themselves represent sacramentally the unity of the Church, or contribute to it efficaciously. The sacramental order is one that proceeds from the external to the interior, from the container to the contents, and then from this priceless contents to its extension throughout all mankind. In other words, it proceeds from Christ's body born of the Virgin Mary and immolated upon the Cross, to Christ's Mystical Body

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I) Roguet, A.-M., O.P., Renseignements Techniques,  
Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, l'Eucharistie, Paris, Editions du Cerf,  
1960, p. 337-346.

gathered from the four quarters of the world and garnered  
 2  
 in paradise.

3. The Eucharist Sacrifice - Principle of Unity

The res et sacramentum of the Eucharist is the immolation of Christ. It is an immolation - res - but sacramental - sacramentum; immolation which lasts as long as the  
 3  
 species remain to be our sacrifice.

In his encyclical on the Mystical Body, Pope Pius XII writes:

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

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 The Eucharist sacrifice makes present the whole mystery of Redemption. Redemption was accomplished under the

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2) La Taille de, M., op. cit., p. 21, 29.

3) Roguet, A.-M., "L'Unité du Corps Mystique dans la Charité, Res et Sacramenti de l'Eucharistie," in Maison-Dieu, Vol. 24, 1950, p. 25.

4) Pope Pius XII, op. cit., p. 27, No. 89.

form of a new alliance which God made with His people. It has, therefore, a social aspect. To be saved, men must join a holy community, the Body whose Head is Christ. The Eucharist, in giving to man the mystery of salvation, signifies and realizes the union of all men in Christ; it builds up the Mystical Body which is the Church.

The secret of the Mass of the Blessed Sacrament reads as follows, "Of Thy goodness, we beseech Thee, O Lord, grant to Thy Church the gifts of unity and peace which are mystically represented under the gifts we offer."<sup>5</sup>

The Eucharistic prayer obtains Christian unity because, in re-presenting the sacrifice of the Cross, it actualizes the force of Redemption; through it, the Church renders to God honor and glory by fulfilling the duties entrusted to her, duties which draw down His benevolence; through it, the Church obtains from God the graces needed for salvation.<sup>6</sup>

The commandment given by Christ which summarizes His doctrine is that of Christian charity. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, you also love one another."<sup>7</sup> That commandment He gave at the moment He instituted the Blessed Eucharist and celebrated the first Mass. The more we read the account

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5) Lasance, F.X., and Walsh, Francis, O.S.B., The New Roman Missal, New York, Benziger Brothers, 1956, p. 640.

6) Clarkson, op. cit., No. 749.

7) John, 13; 34.

of the last Supper, the more we realize that, that night, the Lord was celebrating a liturgy of unity, a union of the faithful with Christ. "Abide in my love" <sup>8</sup> is the condition for union of the faithful among themselves. The connection between the event of His approaching Passion, the institution of the Eucharist and the communion of fraternal charity is evident. The whole Christian mystery is condensed in that solemn moment when Christ declared His love for His own, commands them to renew His Eucharistic sacrifice, and gives them as criterion of their love for Him the love they have for one another. St. John and St. Paul confirm this interpretation of the words of Christ in giving a capital importance to fraternal charity. "For the whole Law is fulfilled in one, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." <sup>9</sup> In the practical order, in the concrete order, in the order of urgency, fraternal charity is first. "Let us therefore love, because God first loved us." <sup>10</sup>

The last Supper, therefore, and every Mass that represents the last Supper, constitutes a liturgy of fraternal charity. <sup>11</sup>

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8) John, 15; 10.

9) Ga., 5; 14.

10) I John, 4; 20.

11) Vergriete, V., O.P., "Eucharistie et Engagement", in Maison-Dieu, Vol. 21-24, 1950, p. 15.

4. Communion - Principle of Unity

Whether we regard the Eucharist as a sacrament or as a sacrifice, its ultimate purpose - res tantum - is to bring redeemed man into the closest possible union with God. In the Eucharist, this is accomplished through union with the whole Christ, who is at once our gift to God and God's gift to us.

The mode of sacramental existence of the Eucharist, or the presence of Jesus Christ, is of such a nature that there cannot be any corporal contact, nor consequently any physical union properly so-called, between the Eucharistic body of the Savior and the body of the one who receives Communion: the union is mediate. Thus the glorious body of Jesus Christ is preserved from any physical profanation by <sup>12</sup> unworthy Communion.

The sacramental union, which takes place in every communion, is not one of the sacramental effects, but a condition which is necessary for the efficacy of the sacrament. For Eucharistic food, as for any other food, manducation must precede the union. In worthy communion this sacramental union takes the form of a mystical union, of a mysterious union through charity, whether we consider it in its cause or effect. The sacramental union comes from the reciprocal love of Jesus and that of the communicant: love

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12) Gihr, Nicolas, Les Sacrements de l'Eglise Catholique, Paris, P. Lethellieux, 1900, Vol. II, p. 243.

tends to union. It must be love which attracts man to the banquet of charity.

The reality, or sacramental grace, of this sacrament is the unity of the Mystical Body says St. Thomas.<sup>13</sup> This is a point of Catholic doctrine clearly revealed but not defined by the Church. All the sacraments have for aim to unify and to sanctify men, but while the other sacraments give the power to work towards that unity, the Eucharist realizes, consummates the unity. The Eucharist makes us one with God in Christ, and one among ourselves. This union is at least moral, since it enables the Christians to think, wish and act as Christ; it is also physical, since through sanctifying grace, Christians participate in the same reality which is the divine life in the human soul of Christ.

a) Sacred Scripture

Three texts from Sacred Scripture could be cited.

"He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him."<sup>14</sup> What is affirmed in this text is the union of each communicant with Christ. "Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are."<sup>15</sup> The union which exists between the Persons of the Blessed Trinity is the model of our union with Christ.

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13) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, III a., q. 73, a. 3.

14) John, 6; 57.

15) John, 17; 12.

St. Paul writing to the Corinthians gives them this advice, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all say the same things; [...] but that you be perfectly united in one mind and in one judgment."<sup>16</sup>

b) Tradition

The Fathers teach the same doctrine. We shall limit ourselves to two quotations. St. Hilary of Poitiers writes thus:

This is how we are united. The Father is in Christ, and Christ is in us. [...] To what degree, we are one in Him through the communion of His Body and Blood, Christ proclaims it in saying, "For I live and you shall live"; which means that He is in the Father through the reality of His divinity, and we are in Him through a new birth, and He is in us through the mystery of the Eucharist. Such is the perfect unity achieved by the Mediator. How this unity in us is real, Christ Himself declares it in these terms, "He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him." The mysterious formula of this perfect unity, Christ teaches in saying, "As I live because of the Father, so he who eats me, he also shall live because of me."

St. Cyril of Alexandria, the great theologian of the Eucharist, also brings out this doctrine:

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16) I Cor., 10; 17.

17) St. Hilary, De Trinitate, 8, 13; P.L., 10, Col. 246-48.

Rightly did we state that union and harmony of mind and soul among the faithful ought to be modeled on the divine unity and essential identity of the Holy Trinity, and in perfectly interwoven accord of the persons with one another. Our present purpose is to show that unity is also in some respects a oneness in the nature, by which we are united to one another and all of us to God through Christ. <sup>18)</sup> Since then we all admit a natural oneness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, let us admit also that we are one in body and in spirit with one another and with God.

18

c) Magisterium

The Council of Florence states:

The effect which this sacrament has in the soul of a person who receives it worthily, is to unite him with Christ. Since it is by grace that a man is incorporated into Christ and united to Christ's members, it follows that those who receive this sacrament worthily, receive an increase of grace.

19

And the Council of Trent adds:

In addition to his other purposes, our Savior left the Eucharist in his Church as a symbol of the unity and love which he desired to unify and unite all Christians.

20

d) Theological Reasons

Like all the other sacraments, the Eucharist produces the grace it signifies, but the Eucharist signifies the unity of the Mystical Body; therefore, the Eucharistic effects unity.

From what has been said above, we must conclude that Christian unity, the unity of the Mystical Body, is not only one effect of this sacrament. It is the particular effect

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18) Quoted by Paul Palmer, in Sacraments and Worship, p. 148.

19) Clarkson, op. cit., No. 717.

20) Ibid., No. 718.

of the Eucharist, the sacramental grace of the sacrament.

The reception of the Body and Blood of Christ completes our incorporation into Christ and our union with all the members in giving us the divine life. This Bread of Life, given in form of food, sustains, fortifies and repairs our spiritual life. It is also the pledge of everlasting glory for our souls and of a glorious resurrection for our bodies. This ecclesiastical Body which is the Church will be completed only in heaven, after the glorious resurrection; and this glorious resurrection will itself be the fruit of the Eucharist. "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting and I will raise him up on the last day."<sup>21</sup>

##### 5. Union with the Blessed Trinity

By the very fact that communion unites us to the humanity of Christ, it unites us also to His divinity. His body being hypostatically united to the Person of the Word, and the Word being united to the Father through the Holy Spirit, it follows that by receiving the body of Christ, we receive the whole Trinity. Such is the effect of Holy Communion: it realizes what is asked by the priest in pouring a drop of water in the wine, "that through His humanity, we may become partakers of His divinity."<sup>22</sup> The Father in giving Himself to His Son gives Himself to all those who are

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21) John, 6; 55-56.

22) Lasance F.X., op. cit., p. 907.

united to Him, and the Son in giving Himself to the Father gives Him also all those who are united to him.

Thus a triple ring unites us to the community of God: that of the consecrated host which unites us to the body of Christ; that of the Incarnation which unites the body of Christ to the Person of the Word; and that of the Trinity which unites the Person of the Word to the other two Persons and to the divine nature.

By uniting us to the divinity of Christ, communion reproduces the union effected at the Incarnation between His divinity and His humanity and prolongs it up to us. It enables us to share its benefits, since in communion, Christ does not assume human nature in general but the human nature of each of the communicants. Each communion is like a new birth of Christ in us. Thus the work of our salvation is consummated in the Eucharist.

#### 6. The Eucharist - Sacrament par Excellence

If the Eucharist is compared with the other sacraments and first of all with Baptism, it will be found that Baptism does not incorporate one into the Church and into Christ except by the power of the Eucharist. Baptism is the sacrament of death, despoiling us of the old Adam and of the sad life of inherited sin. But it does so in view of a new life, the life of grace and justice, to be drawn from the bosom of the new Adam. Hence Baptism looks to the Eucharist as the source of that blessed life which Baptism symbolizes.

And thus with the sacramental signification of Baptism,  
<sup>23</sup>  
 there goes forth an appeal for the Eucharist.

The other sacraments confer grace in dependence of the Eucharist. Each one of them in its own way has in view either a preparation for the Eucharist or a safeguard of the eucharistic life. Penance is the sacrament or readmission to the Eucharist; Confirmation strengthens the sacramental bond against difficulties from without. Matrimony shields it from within. Holy Orders is entirely directed to the oblation and consecration of the Eucharist; Extreme Unction, by removing the last remains of sin, puts the soul in readiness for perfect union, for communion in plenitude.

Therefore all the sacraments lead to the Eucharist or form a bulwark around it. If it is true that a means is desirable only in view of the end, then we must admit that all the other sacraments are pregnant with a desire for that one which marshalls their own whole activity. On this account what is special to each of them is introduced by means of sanctifying grace which is itself truly and properly the work of the Eucharist.

The special disposition imprinted by the other sacraments, the Eucharist either requires or utilizes. They are like so many avenues, channels, or arteries, open within

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23) La Taille de, M., op. cit., p. 30.

us to the vital influence of the Eucharist. Hence there is between the Eucharist and them a most important difference as regards the kind on instrumental causality which belongs to them respectively in relation to grace. In the Eucharist, that causality is perfective: it attains sanctifying grace in itself and does so by its own means. In the other sacraments, it is merely dispositive: it attains sanctifying grace by means of various forms of one or another disposition peculiar to each sacrament, which coalesce with grace only by the power of the Eucharist.

Repeated reception of the Eucharist is a necessary means of perseverance. It makes sure our progress in grace, which progress is itself an indispensable condition of fidelity to the essential observance of the commandments. As a matter of fact, the increase of grace comes from the same source as its beginning: from the one fountain of living water, the Eucharist. It was fitting therefore that Jesus Christ should institute the Eucharist under the appearances of daily food, such as bread and wine. It was also natural that in the prayer which we have received from Him, there should stand at the head of all other petitions made in our behalf that of daily bread for the soul even more than for the body.

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24) La Taille de, M. op. cit., p. 30-32.

Among the sacraments, the Eucharist occupies an eminent place. Its excellence comes from the fact that it contains and gives Christ Himself. The Eucharist is the center of all sacraments. "It is the consummation of the spiritual life," says St. Thomas, "and the end of all sacraments."<sup>25</sup>

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25) St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 73, a. 3.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing discussion on the theology of the res et sacramentum, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. The Son of God assumed human nature, died on the Cross to redeem fallen humanity and thereby acquired infinite merits for the salvation of all. Christ is the human encounter of man with God. He is God made visible under a human form. He is the source of all graces and the primary and necessary means of union with the Mystical Body and hence with the Blessed Trinity.
2. The Mystical Body of Christ which is the Church is the continuation and the prolongation of the Incarnation. It is Christ, the Head, plus all the Christians, His members. The Church, therefore, is a sacrament and the merits acquired by Christ can be applied to man only through union with the Church.
3. Sacraments are permanent and efficacious signs of Christ uniting the recipient in a special way to the Mystical Body.
4. The union with the Mystical Body is effected through the res et sacramentum of each sacrament: an effect which is prior to grace and dispositive to grace.
5. This union is always effected when the sacrament is validly administered. This is what the phrase "ex opere operato" means.

6. Each sacrament effects union with the Mystical Body in its own specific way. In Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, the res et sacramentum is the character which configures the recipient to Christ for a special function in the Mystical Body.
7. The character of Baptism incorporates one into the Mystical Body and makes him a member of the ecclesiastical people of God. It officially confers the right, the power and the duty of participating in Christian worship, and of receiving the other sacraments. It identifies the Christian with Christ. It orientates towards the Eucharist by putting in the soul a desire for communion and initiates the Christian to the fruits of the Eucharist.
8. The character of Confirmation confers a specific kingly, sacerdotal and prophetic dignity to the Christian. Those who are confirmed are enrolled in the task of witnessing, thus of continuing the role of the prophets of the Old Law. Confirmation gives the recipient a participation in the priesthood of Christ; it gives strength to face the enemy and strength for the apostolate. It is through the zeal of those confirmed that the work of salvation is achieved here and now. Confirmation gives to the Christian, born of God, the state of adulthood.
9. The sacramental character of Holy Orders imprints on the soul of the priest an indelible mark of configuration

with Christ thereby conferring on him all the priestly powers of the Word Incarnate. In virtue of the character, the priest is another Christ having the power to offer sacrifice and to administer the sacraments.

10. The res et sacramentum of Penance is reconciliation with the Church. Union with Christ after sin is effected only through reconciliation with the ecclesiastical community, and it may be effected without the bestowal of sanctifying grace. This is because the action of the Holy Spirit in reconciling the penitent with the Church is an action different from the operation of the indwelling Spirit from whom the sinner is justified. The divine forgiveness is contained in the reconciliation with the Church, but grace may be withheld because of the disposition of the recipient.
11. The res et sacramentum of Extreme Unction is a special bond with the Church as comforter and healer. This is temporary and it resembles the matrimonial bond in that it is a moral entity. In the name of Christ and of the Church, the priest marks the soul of the sick with a spiritual unction. Because of this mark, God the Father looks with tenderness upon the sick and helps him spiritually and corporally.
12. The res et sacramentum of Matrimony lies in the natural bond of matrimonial contract raised to the dignity of a sacrament. Conjugal love is compared to the love of Christ for his Church. While matrimony binds Christians

on a natural level, the Spirit living in their souls binds them supernaturally to each other and to the blessed Trinity. Through the sacrament, God becomes a part of their conjugal union. Christian spouses are incorporated in the Church in a specific manner : they form a living organ of the Mystical Body.

13. The real presence and the sacrifice of Christ, that is the res et sacramentum, are effected and manifested in Eucharist through the consecrated species. The sacramental words do not create the Body of Christ, they transubstantiate bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The eucharistic sacrifice and sacrament is a principle of unity. Christian unity, the unity of the Mystical Body, is not only one effect of the Eucharist, it is the particular effect of the sacrament. The Eucharist is the sacrament par excellence. The other sacraments lead to the Eucharist or form a bulwark around it. All the sacraments are pregnant with a desire for the Eucharist and all converge towards it.
14. We conclude by saying that the sacraments always effect union with the Mystical Body when the rite is validly administered. This is done through the res et sacramentum of each sacrament.

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