

The Roman Liturgy, Faith and Ecumenism

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Introduction

In 1984, a Lutheran-Catholic ecumenical document entitled ‘Facing Unity’ was published, signed by an American Lutheran theologian and the Catholic Bishop of Copenhagen in Denmark. Several members of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity signed as observers.² Building on previous agreements, “Facing Unity” proposes full communion between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran churches, based on a differentiated doctrinal and sacramental consensus. It states that differences exist between Roman Catholics and Lutherans regarding authority, grace and justification, the Eucharist and the other sacraments, but that these differences are no longer such as to divide the churches. Consequently, there is little to prevent mutual recognition of ministries, which would entail mutual recognition by the Catholic episcopate and the Lutheran ministry. Full communion between the Catholic episcopate and the Lutheran ministry/episcopate would be sealed through a programme of joint ordinations: Catholic priests and Lutheran ministers would henceforth be ordained by the laying on of hands by at least one bishop from each church. The Catholic signatories of ‘Facing Unity’ believe that if Catholic bishops were to join with Lutheran dignitaries to ordain Lutheran ministers from now on, the problem of the defectus ordinis in the Lutheran ministry would be resolved. However, the document specifies that Lutheran ministers who have already been ordained without Catholic participation would not be re-ordained.

The document describes the model of unity known as ‘reconciled diversity’. Reconciled diversity within full communion between Lutherans and Roman Catholics would apply to Eucharistic doctrine and liturgy, such that authentic Christian faith in the Eucharistic presence of Christ would be regarded as compatible with two different ways of expressing it, according to the confessional identity of Catholics and Lutherans. Roman Catholics would continue to believe in transubstantiation, whilst Lutherans would consider themselves free not to believe in transubstantiation, affirming instead the presence of the body of Christ in, with

¹ Lecture delivered on the occasion of the seventh CIEL symposium, 8–10 November 2001, in Versailles.

² This document was published by the Ecumenical Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in **Deepening Communion**, ed. William G. Rusch and Jeffrey Gros, United States Catholic Conference, Washington, 1998, pp. 15–72.

and in the bread; the difference between transubstantiation and the refusal to affirm transubstantiation is regarded as a difference in theological explanation, not as a difference in faith.

Furthermore, following fifty years of theological renewal within the Catholic Church—reinforced by the liturgical renewal of Vatican II—and in parallel with a Eucharistic renewal within the Lutheran Church, the remaining Catholic-Lutheran differences concerning the Eucharistic sacrifice are no longer regarded by such a document as dividing the churches.

On 15 October 2000, at St Paul's Parish in Salzburg, Austria, Father Peter Hausberger concelebrated a Mass with a Methodist minister: the words of consecration were spoken respectively by the priest over the bread and by the minister over the wine. This is an example of what reconciled diversity can lead to. In response to the event, the Archbishop of Salzburg, Monsignor Eder, was forced to suspend the priest. On 12 November 2000, he had a pastoral letter read out in all the parishes of the diocese to explain that unity could not be found outside the truth and that the Eucharistic sacrifice lay at the heart of the Church's unity.

However, our symposium here shows that these proposals for full Catholic–Lutheran communion run parallel to a growing movement in favour of the pre-Vatican II Roman Mass.

What is the connection between the old Roman Mass and ecumenism? If the proposals of 'Facing Unity' were adopted, then Lutherans would have to accept the full Christian legitimacy of all Eucharistic liturgies celebrated within the Catholic communion and allow their members to receive communion occasionally at Catholic Masses. Nowadays, some Lutheran ecumenists regard the reformed liturgy of the Catholic Church as acceptable. But could these Lutherans regard the Roman Mass prior to this reform as a liturgy with which they could be in full communion? According to the renowned American Lutheran liturgist Frank Senn, the recent reform, prepared by decades of scholarly research, has been at least partly responsible for the convergence on Eucharistic doctrine between Catholic and Lutheran theologians.³

Clearly, the nature of the Church and the priesthood, the ecumenical process, and the question of the traditional Roman Mass are interlinked. To address the theme of faith, liturgy and ecumenism, this

³ See Frank Senn, **Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical**, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1997, p. 651.

study aims to: 1) examine the ecumenical implications of the liturgical reform from the perspective of the Lutheran Reformation, and 2) demonstrate that certain aspects of the twentieth-century Catholic theological and liturgical renewal, whilst so important for ecumenism, do not necessarily represent progress in the truth of the faith—the sole basis for the return to unity of the Church of the heirs of the Reformation.

I Liturgical Reform and Ecumenism

A. The Lutheran Liturgy and the Roman Mass

To understand a contemporary Lutheran's assessment of the liturgical reform, Section I A of our study will compare the Lutheran service with the ancient Roman rite, concluding with a discussion of the theological significance of the similarities and differences.

I A. 1.

To study the Lutheran liturgy, we shall comment on a pamphlet published by a 'High Church' Lutheran pastor around 1960, and then examine the American Lutheran liturgy in 1978, as described by Lutheran theologians.

Catholics would be surprised by the external symbols and expressions of devotion described by this Lutheran pastor in the 1960 booklet. This is because they know only that Martin Luther denied the transubstantiation of bread and wine; they are unaware that Luther firmly believed in the presence of Christ in the bread and wine during the Lord's Supper, and that many Lutherans have maintained a very real faith in this presence throughout the centuries. Many Catholics are unaware that many Lutherans retain several 'Catholic' aspects in their liturgical practice.

A traditional Latin Christian piety characterises the Lutheran parish described in the 1960 leaflet. It explains that the Lutheran Reformation never severed ties with the Holy Catholic Church and rejected only those elements of the Roman liturgy that were contrary to the Word of God. All good things that were not contrary to the Word of God—such as vestments, music and ceremonies—could be retained. Through its rich liturgy, a Lutheran parish provides the means of grace through the preaching of the Word of God and the administration of the sacraments. The church should be open during the week, and its architecture and furnishings should be such that they are fitting for the house of God and lift up hearts and minds in prayer for the glory of God and the sanctification of humankind in time and eternity. This is because outward symbols not only express faith but also instil faith and devotion.

In practical terms, this includes altar candles, vestments, and bowing or genuflecting before the altar and in response to the minister's blessing at the end of the service .⁴

But all this beauty and reverence in a Lutheran liturgy and church exist without the tabernacle and the presence of Christ within it. The author goes on to quote the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article 24, in which the Reformers—who had removed the Offertory and the Canon from the Mass—expressed their satisfaction with the liturgical renewal; a renewal which, far from abolishing the Mass, as their Roman opponents claimed, had in fact preserved and defended it. Reverend Lang describes the 'celebration of the Eucharist' without mentioning a priest offering the sacrifice, but only a 'minister': 'In the Old Testament, God Himself prescribed the priest's vestments . . . In the New Testament . . . it was natural that ministers should wear distinctive garments, especially when they were to celebrate the principal service, the Holy Eucharist.'⁵

The booklet conveys the impression of a liturgy that is dignified, prayerful and imbued with transcendence. For centuries in Lutheranism, the altar faced the apse, not the congregation .⁶ Yet at this 'altar', there was no priest offering Christ's sacrifice to the Father.

Our impressions are not very different when we examine the commentaries and handbooks based on the American Lutheran Book of Worship of 1978⁷ or influenced by the Lutheran liturgical renewal of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The 1978 Lutheran liturgy itself reflects several decades of liturgical renewal, a movement which not only emphasises the weekly celebration of Holy Communion after centuries of infrequent celebration in many churches, but also reintroduces several Catholic elements. These developments are mentioned when ecumenists speak of the convergence between Catholics and Lutherans since Vatican II: the Novus Ordo Missae was matched by a Lutheran renewal of practices that the Reformers themselves had maintained for a time. Let us examine this convergence and see exactly what it consists of.

In Stauffer's American Lutheran commentary, we see a Lutheran sanctuary that could easily pass for a contemporary Catholic sanctuary: a raised, almost bare altar and

⁴ Rev. Paul H. Lang, *Questions Often Asked by a Newcomer into a Lutheran Parish*, New York, 1958, pp. 3, 5–6, 11, 13.

Una Sancta Press, Roosevelt, L.I.,

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶ Senn, p. 283.

⁷ See, for example, S. Anita Stauffer et al., **Lutherans at Worship**, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1978.

an ambo, positioned in the centre and surrounded on three sides by the congregation. We also read a passage that could well have been written today by those Catholics seeking to reform the overly didactic nature of the new liturgy: 'Worship should be an opportunity to learn . . . however, conceiving a service or organising worship primarily as a teaching tool is also contrary to the very essence of worship. Worship must be directed towards God, not towards the people. Worship is meant to praise God'. However, this theocentric Lutheran liturgy does not include the offering of a propitiatory sacrifice by a priest, the offering of Christ to the Father. Certainly there is a Christian priesthood, but it is the priesthood of all the baptised, sent by God into the world: 'It is clear that the divine acts in Jesus and their influence upon us through his Spirit have made us priests . . . A priest is the intermediary, or mediator, between God and his people . . . The body of Christ, the Church, is an intermediary in proclaiming salvation to the world through Christ. In this case, the movement is from God towards the people'.⁸ The Church of all the baptised turns towards God to offer the sacrifice: 'In its priestly role, the Church also turns in the other direction, from the world towards God. This movement bears the ancient name of sacrifice (1 Peter 2). The essence of the priesthood is sacrifice, and the essence of sacrifice is the offering of something or someone to God'.⁹ It should be noted that the term 'offering' is not used here to refer to the bread and wine or the body and blood of Christ in the hands of a priest, but solely to the inner submission of the hearts of the baptised to God, in their daily lives in the world, which, according to Luther, is the Christian's monastery: 'If it is true that, bound to the forces of evil, men and women have taken possession of the earth and enslave others in order to use it for their idolatrous ends, then it is only right that the body of Christ should express the truth that these enslaved people and the entire enslaved world belong to the Lord . . . the body of Christ . . . as a priesthood, not only announces and proclaims but also asks of and offers to God'.¹⁰

Since the passage quoted comes from a specifically liturgical context, we may conclude that, true to itself, the Lutheran Reformation continues to uphold its de-ritualisation of the sacrifice offered by the Church, the Christian, and the priest: when we speak here of sacrifice, there is absolutely no question of a ritual sacrifice of bread and wine, or of the body and blood of Christ, to God.

It is true that, regarding the part of their liturgy which resembles the presentation of the offerings, the Eucharistic prayer and communion in the Missal of Paul VI, Lutheran commentators speak of

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

of a 'setting apart, a blessing and a receiving of the bread of life and the cup of salvation'.¹¹ The liturgy includes an offering of gifts from the faithful in the form of money or aid for the needs of the church, or possibly bread and wine brought to the altar.¹² Nevertheless, regardless of this Whatever commentators may say, the official text never 'offers' the bread and wine placed on the altar, and a fortiori never offers Christ to the Father. No doubt wishing to express their heartfelt gratitude to God for their own justification, which is founded exclusively on the faith that they are forgiven, the faithful and ministers who bring bread and wine, useful goods or money into the sanctuary are in reality offering 'ourselves, our time, and our possessions', * * ¹³, and not, by virtue of an imminent transubstantiation, the spotless victim and the chalice of salvation to God. Another commentator describes the offering as follows:

'Another element, recently introduced in some of our gatherings, is the restoration of the procession of the offerings. . . . the bread and wine are also brought to the altar . . . and presented as symbols of the other gifts we make . . . this demonstrates that God uses our offerings as vehicles of grace. Our money supports and develops the church's ministry. Our bread and wine become for us the communion of the Lord's body and blood. This is the meaning of the offerings.'¹⁴

There is not a trace of propitiation in the official text or the commentaries. Similarly, the minister, referred to as a 'priest' only in branches of Scandinavian Lutheranism, never refers to himself when offering Christ's sacrifice to God; rather, he 'offers the bread and wine to the faithful, declaring them to be the body of Christ and the new covenant of his blood'; he symbolises 'the Lord present in the midst of his people'.¹⁵

The absence of a propitiatory sacrifice by the minister and the Church is confirmed by the way in which the altar is described. Whilst the word 'altar' is normally and frequently used by Lutherans, it is defined here in terms of the Lord's Supper rather than sacrifice: 'The altar is the table of our Lord'.¹⁶ Together with the pulpit from which the Word is proclaimed, the altar is regarded as a focal point

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 12. The accompanying photograph, which shows a minister at the altar, is identical in every respect—ornaments, candles, book, chalice and paten, gestures—to the offering of wine in the new rite, except that the Lutheran minister raises the chalice in the Tridentine manner, whereas in the new rite the chalice is raised barely above the altar.

¹² Philip H. Pfatteicher and Carlos R. Messerli, *Manual on the Lutheran Book of Worship*, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1979, pp. 231–232.

¹³ Stauffer, p. 53.

¹⁴ Edgar S. Brown, Jr., *Living the Liturgy*, Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1961, p. 86.

¹⁵ Stauffer et al., pp. 46–47.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

centre of the worship space. The booklet continues: ‘The Lutheran Book of Worship reserves the use of the altar for Holy Communion; it is not used during the service before the offering, when the table is set and prepared for the Eucharistic meal . . . The word “altar” comes from the Latin *alta*, meaning ‘high’, and the height of the altar emphasises the centrality of Holy Communion in the life of the Church. Freestanding altars more perfectly express the conception of the Eucharist as a meal for which the family of God gathers at the table of his Son’.¹⁷

Thus, when we examine twentieth-century American Lutheran liturgy and its ecumenical convergence with certain aspects of the structure of historical Eastern and Western liturgies,¹⁸ we discover a strict limit to this convergence: despite commentators’ openness to the idea of symbolically offering bread and wine to God in the liturgy, the official texts stubbornly reject any wording suggesting the offering of what has been placed on the altar and consecrated by the Eucharistic prayer. And the commentators, whilst encouraging the faithful to offer the bread and wine, even explicitly reject the idea of the priest and the Church offering Christ to the Father.¹⁹

What Lutherans have gained through their liturgical renewal is a greater emphasis on communion after generations of it being given less consideration, a Eucharistic prayer of thanksgiving centred on the words of institution, and a restoration of the meaning of the offering of bread and wine—but not of the body and blood of Christ—to God.

I A. 2

What is the theological significance of the similarities and contrasts between the Lutheran and traditional Roman liturgies?

For many Lutherans, the commonalities with traditional Western Catholic piety – beauty, symbolism and veneration of divine majesty – reinforce their conviction that Lutheran churches are the ‘evangelical and catholic’ branch of the one universal Church.²⁰ They

¹⁷ *Ibid.* The height of the altar signifies the importance of communion, not the lifting up of a victim to God.

¹⁸ See Philip H. Pfatteicher, *Commentary on the Lutheran Book of Worship: Lutheran Liturgy in Its Ecumenical Context*, Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, 1990, pp. 151–206.

¹⁹ “In the Roman Catholic liturgy, the body and blood of Christ are offered anew to God for the sins of the living and the repose of the dead. This is what Rome claims, and it is evident when one studies the prayers of the Roman Mass today [in 1961]. Luther retained none of this . . . Returning to the original intuition, he reformed the Mass to make it truly evangelical. . . Whilst the other Reformers devised new ritual ceremonies quite removed from the structure of the Mass, Luther was conservative. He retained the Mass, eliminating the non-evangelical aspects, and once again setting God’s gift like a jewel in its setting.” Brown, p. 108.

²⁰ American Lutherans and Catholics have founded a Centre for Catholic and Evangelical Theology, which publishes a quarterly journal, **Pro Ecclesia**.

They are keen to point out that Martin Luther was an ordained priest, and that the first generation of Lutheran ministers were ordained by priests of an evangelical spirit solely because the bishops had excommunicated the communities associated with the evangelical Reformation. By

‘Catholic’ they mean a church rooted in a historical tradition dating back to the apostles and maintaining the divinely instituted succession of ministers with the authority to preach, conduct worship and administer the sacraments.

But Lutherans still hold fast to the ‘evangelical differences’ from the medieval Mass as reformed by Luther. By ‘evangelical’, Lutherans refer to their insistence on justification by faith in the Word and on the sacraments, purified of certain medieval additions and thus restored to their original biblical and patristic form. And indeed, the Lutheran Reformation removed numerous ‘additions’ from the medieval Mass, starting with the explicit offering of bread and wine, regarded by Saint Caesarius of Arles as the sacrifice of the Church. In the medieval and Tridentine Mass, the priest rises and declares that he offers an unblemished victim and the chalice of eternal salvation; in a certain sense, his words offer Christ to the Father as a propitiation, because the unblemished victim and the chalice are offered for his own sins and the sins of all, living and dead, for the salvation of the whole world. Having offered the bread and wine, he bows and asks that the sacrifice be accepted by virtue of the humility and contrition of those who offer it; he invokes a sanctifying blessing upon ‘the sacrifice’ before him on the altar; he implores the Holy Trinity that the oblation made in memory of Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection may be accepted. Through the **canon actionis**, the priest asks God three times to bless the offerings before asking that they become the Body and Blood of Christ, over which he then performs the gestures and pronounces the words over the bread and the chalice, which subsequently receive his threefold adoration and that of the faithful. Having adored what is present on the altar, he declares once more that he is offering a spotless victim to God. But at this moment, his act of adoration shows that the bread and wine offered by the Church have become the Body and Blood of Christ, which he now offers. From this moment until Communion, the repeated signs of the cross and genuflections focus the attention of the priest and the faithful on the presence, here and now, of Christ, the divine victim. At the end of Mass, the priest prays once more that the sacrifice he has offered may

be pleasing to the divine majesty .²¹ The sacrifice and the Real Presence are elements of the faith emphasised in the traditional Roman liturgy, and to this day, the reinterpretation or rejection of these doctrinal elements has manifested itself among Lutherans through the reduction or complete disappearance of references to such elements in the Lutheran liturgy.

B. Lutheran–Catholic ecumenism in the Eucharistic and liturgical spheres

The contrast between the Lutheran liturgy and the old Roman Mass is strikingly illustrated by the following statements made in 1967, during an ecumenical debate, by the Lutheran theologian Bertil Gartner, two years before the reform of the Ordo Missae: ‘We [Lutherans] do not in any way offer an expiatory sacrifice in the Eucharist because atonement took place once and for all . . . To regard the Lord’s Supper as our offering of Christ is contrary to the New Testament understanding of the Eucharist ’.²²

But then, what positive points does this Lutheran make about the Eucharist in ecumenical dialogue? He writes, “The presence of Christ in the Eucharist means, amongst other things, that Christ’s sacrifice is effectively present. Consequently, the Eucharist is a sacrifice in the sense that Christ is present as the crucified, glorified and interceding Christ.”²³

According to the Lutheran Kent Knutson, Catholics and Lutherans in the 1967 debate recognised ‘that the one and only sacrifice that ever was is now present in the Eucharist ’.²⁴ Thus, for ecumenists , Christ’s sacrifice is made present, even though there is no offering of this sacrifice to God by the priest and the faithful; Lutherans and Catholics agree that the sacrifice of Calvary is ‘made present’ in the Eucharist.

Regarding the presence of Christ himself in the sacrament, Knutson states that Lutherans have not specified the moment at which this presence begins ‘but have emphasised his presence throughout the entire action’. Regarding the sacramental sign which ‘always communicates what it

²¹ Quoting Bossuet, Julien Green wrote that ‘the Mass, in his view, is “Jesus Christ offered in person in a true sacrifice”. . . a sacrifice in which we never cease to offer Jesus Christ in person and which is nevertheless always unique, because we always offer the same victim, a sacrifice unique in its kind, in which the one we offer is at the same time the one who gives us everything, being himself the infinite gift that makes us happy. ’ *Ce qu’il faut d’amour à l’homme*, Plon, Paris, 1978, p. 141.

²² Bertil E. Gartner, ‘The Eucharist as Sacrifice in the New Testament’, in **Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue I–III**, III The Eucharist as Sacrifice, ed. by Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy, vols. 1–3, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1965–67, p. 33

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Kent S. Knutson, ‘Eucharist as Sacrifice: Roman Catholic–Lutheran Dialogue’, *ibid.*, p. 13.

promises': 'It is appropriate to speak of the bread and wine as signs of our Lord's presence. Lutherans emphasise the communal aspect of the meal. The entire Eucharistic celebration—which includes the congregation entering together, the preaching of the Word, the reading of the words of Institution, the liturgical service, the eating and drinking—is an integral part of the sign'.²⁵ Lutherans regard the 'worship of the host', so prominent in the Mass, as a specifically Roman Catholic practice.²⁶

Whilst drafting a joint study on ecumenical developments in 1980, some ten years after Paul VI's reform, a Catholic ecumenist and a Lutheran ecumenist were able to agree on the following point:

'Whilst traditionally "different interpretations of the sacrament were strongly influenced by personal liturgical habits", by 1980 liturgical changes in both churches had come to "influence each church's understanding of the Eucharist".'²⁷ Whilst 'at the time of the Reformation, these two concepts [real presence and sacrifice] governed and dominated the understanding of the Eucharist' and 'were also reflected in the liturgy' through the words of consecration, which were spoken more slowly and distinctly by the priest than the rest of the canon, and through sacrificial terminology, these two dimensions are, in the Reformed Catholic and Lutheran liturgies, on the verge of becoming

'elements of a broader picture'. And so 'the basis of any discussion of the Eucharist is no longer presence or sacrifice, but what the Church does in her worship ... the Eucharist is linked to the historical and public life of Jesus Christ. In the Eucharist, Christians commemorate the past actions of Jesus Christ. In this way, the Church once again enters into his life that saves us, his death, and his resurrection ... A re-enactment of these salvific actions takes place in and through the liturgical celebration'.

The Lutheran and Catholic authors of these lines then examine the new Catholic and Lutheran Eucharistic prayers in which this 'mysterious actualisation' is expressed.²⁸

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁷ Glenn C. Stone (Lutheran) and Charles La Fontaine, S.A. (Catholic), **Exploring the Faith We Share**, Paulist Press, New York, 1980, p. 47.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 47–50.

The Lutheran Institute for Ecumenical Research summarised this position as follows in 1973: ‘B. New developments in Catholic Eucharistic doctrine and practice (15) . . . Vatican II initiated liturgical reforms that put an end to the exclusivity of the Roman Canon. New Eucharistic prayers have emerged in which the one-sided conceptions of the sacrifice of the Mass—rejected by the Reformers—are set aside. (16) Some examples of this new development: a) the epiclesis and the anamnesis become the central focus of the Eucharistic prayer.’ Taking Christ’s words ‘Take and eat’ in a literal sense, Lutherans expect further progress: ‘The adoration of the consecrated host and the practice of processions, which run counter to the communal nature of the Lord’s Supper, have not yet ceased, however.’²⁹

Similarly, a Lutheran theologian was able to write joyfully in 1970: ‘The year 1969 was a year of great achievement for the Catholic liturgical reform . . . Our attention as Lutherans is focused on three decisions: the implementation of a new ordo of the Mass (Institutio Missalis Romanae [sic]). . . In order to assess what has been achieved, we must realise that loyal champions of the stature of Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci were unable to prevent the implementation of the reform of the Mass. At the last moment, they sought to mobilise the Curia to halt this ‘heresy’, which broke with 400 years of Counter-Reformation tradition.’³⁰

C. The position of certain Catholic theologians

The Lutherans we have just quoted regard the liturgical reform as embodying, amongst Catholics, a new way of understanding the nature of the Eucharistic liturgy. Within the framework of this renewed understanding, Christ’s unique historical sacrifice becomes present through a memorial of thanksgiving, but the underlying idea of an offering by the ordained priest begins to fade. Lutherans also welcome the fact that the substantial presence of Christ under the sacred species can now be understood as part of his mysterious presence through the memorial and thanksgiving.

Unfortunately, we must admit that a significant portion of Catholic literature

²⁹ “Statement by the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, France, on Lutheran–Roman Catholic Intercommunion”, in **Lutheran World**, vol. 20, no. 4, 1973, p. 356. This document summarises what an ecumenical agreement on the Eucharistic sacrifice might look like as follows: “(22) a) In the Eucharist, the one sacrifice of the cross is sacramentally present but not repeated. b) The Church participates in Christ’s sacrifice because of the strong unity that binds Christ to his body. One can speak of ‘Christ’s offering’ by the congregation only in this sense.” p. 357

³⁰ Friedrich-Wilhelm Künneth, “Lutheran Responsibility and Liturgical Reform,” **Lutheran World**, *Publication of the Lutheran World Federation*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1970, p. 181.

Contemporary literature and teaching on the Eucharist, ranging from the most popular to the most scholarly, would confirm this Lutheran perception of a renewed understanding of the Eucharistic sacrifice within the Catholic Church of the twentieth century. Among countless possible examples, let us cite the following:

‘Regarding this paragraph [1323 of the new Catechism], and the teachings of Vatican II on the Eucharist, Edward Schillebeeckx writes: “The Council abandoned the old sacrificial concept common to many religions and moved directly to the biblical and ecclesial concept of sacrifice, with the Paschal Mystery at its centre.”’³¹ The old concept to which Schillebeeckx refers was primarily a concept of worship. It emphasised the mediatorial role of the priest who performs sacrificial rites, often centred on sacrificial immolation . . . The new concept is essentially historical rather than liturgical . . . One of the features of the study of Holy Scripture during this century has been the study of the Jewish origins of the New Testament . . . Consequently, the expression ‘Do this in remembrance of me’ is linked to the fact that, just as the Jewish Passover commemorated the events of the Exodus under Moses, so Christ’s Eucharist commemorates his ‘exodus’, namely his death and resurrection. The ecumenical significance of this discovery is, of course, far-reaching. We know from the New Testament (for example, in the Letter to the Hebrews) that Christ’s death and resurrection constitute the great sacrifice of our redemption. Consequently, this notion of a Jewish ritual memorial has opened up a new perspective for us in approaching the controversial question of the Eucharistic sacrifice . . . The divisions which in the past seemed insurmountable are beginning to fade away.”³¹

In a theological encyclopaedia used in Catholic seminaries and religious houses, Father Robert Daly, SJ, confirms this historical view of ancient authenticity, medieval distortion and, finally, the contemporary rediscovery of biblical and patristic authenticity:

‘Until the third century, Christians apparently offered no sacrifice other than the entirely spiritual sacrifice of prayer, thanksgiving and good works . . . This highly spiritual attitude was not easy to maintain. With Hippolytus at the beginning of the

³¹ Raymond Moloney, SJ, ‘The doctrine on the Eucharist’, in *Commentary on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, ed. Michael J. Walsh, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1994, pp. 259–273, pp. 264–266.

In the third century, we find language suggesting that Christians were beginning to view their bishops not only as those responsible for the spiritual worship of the Eucharistic prayer, but also as those who preside over or perform a ritual sacrificial act. . . presbyters began to be called ‘priests’; the Eucharistic elements began to be called ‘offerings’. . . Whereas for Origen the emphasis on sacrifice is primarily ethical, linked to the practice of the Christian life, in Augustine the specifically Eucharistic aspect

begins to take precedence.³² We are not far from the aberration against which the

Reformers protested so vigorously against—namely, the notion of a priest who appears to have quasi-absolute power, even when separated from the Church, to offer the sacrifice of the Mass as a (according to a false popular notion) ‘repetition’ of Christ’s single sacrifice of atonement. What was, for the Fathers... a representation (*Vergegenwartigung*) of his entirely sufficient offering at the Last Supper and on Calvary has been obscured by the terribly false notion that, increasingly, the priest is the principal agent who offers this sacrifice *in persona Christi*. This misconception continues to wreak havoc, even today, amongst many priests who are unable to resist ‘acting out’ (as if they were Christ) the words of institution, rather than proclaiming them correctly as an integral part of the Eucharistic prayer. . . . The liturgical and ecumenical developments of the twentieth century have enabled Christian churches with sacramental traditions to achieve a remarkable theological convergence in their understanding of ‘the Church’s offering’ and the Eucharistic sacrifice.”

The greatest contribution to this development appears to have been historical research and theological reflection informed by Odo Casel’s ‘theology of mystery’.³³

Nevertheless, these few examples show that there is a tendency amongst certain Catholic and Lutheran theologians to promote a consensus on the Eucharist as a sacrifice and on the presence of Christ in the liturgy—a consensus which both sides associate with the liturgical changes introduced by the recent liturgical reform.

³² For an interpretation of the Didache as an offering in the literal sense, see A. Michel, ‘Mass’ in DTC 10/1, “II. The Mass according to the Fathers, up to Saint Cyprian”, pp. 865–882. For the texts of St Augustine which refer to ‘sacrifice’ in the liturgical sense within the Eucharistic context, see **Enchiridion Theologicum Sancti Augustini**, ed. Franciscus Moriones, **Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos**, La Editorial Católica, Madrid, 1961, pp. 607–612. (Note by Santogrossi)

³³ Article “Sacrifice”, in **The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship**, ed. Peter Fink, SJ, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1990, pp. 1135–1137.

D. The concepts of sacrifice and the Real Presence in the liturgical reform

We might say that, like the Lutheran ecumenists and Catholic theologians we have cited, many ordinary Catholics have also felt that something had ‘changed’ in the new rite compared with the old one:

‘The sacrifice is mentioned at least three times in the new Mass. Mentioned, indeed, but that is all, whereas the concept of the “Eucharist” has been explained at length to the faithful. It is perfectly clear that we have been faced with what theologians have called a obscuring of the most important parts of the Mass [...]’³⁴

I realised in a flash just how skilfully the Church was being led from one way of believing to another. This was not a manipulation of the faith, but something more subtle. To those who might object that the sacrifice is mentioned at least three times in the new Mass, I might reply that there is a significant difference between merely mentioning a truth and emphasising it. [...]’³⁵

The first time I heard Mass in French, I could scarcely believe it was a Catholic Mass, and ever since I have been at a loss. Only the consecration reassured me, although it was word for word the same as the Anglican one. But once again, I decided to get used to this ceremony which is now called the celebration of the Eucharist. Why not the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? I was so keen to obey Rome that I didn’t ask myself too many questions, and I admit that for a year or two I lived happily within the new Church. This was due in part to the seriousness and piety of the Missionary Fathers, who celebrated Mass in an irreproachable manner.’’³⁶

Two observations by Julien Green are worth noting in our study of the concepts of sacrifice and the Real Presence: firstly, the new liturgy is a sacrifice, but the emphasis on this aspect seems less pronounced than in the old one. Secondly, what is lacking from the point of view of the sacrificial offering may be compensated for by the solemnity and piety with which it is celebrated; however, as the Church’s authorities have often acknowledged in recent times, the current practice of the liturgy has led to much confusion.

In the reform, the verbal and ritual expression of the sacrifice seems to have diminished at the beginning of Mass. Limiting ourselves to the most common form of celebration by a single priest, we note

³⁴ Julien Green, **What Man Needs is Love**, pp. 150–151.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 143.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 135–136.

that in the Tridentine rite, the prayers at the foot of the altar focus on ‘the altar’, the place of sacrifice. Whilst Catherine Pickstock has shown how the sequence of prayers recited by the priest as he ascends to the altar—marked by hesitation and renewed approach—emphasises divine transcendence and the miracle of grace,³⁷ we might add that this back-and-forth movement highlights the altar itself. By contrast, the Novus Ordo Ritus Initiales are generally celebrated away from the altar. The (optional) words ‘ad sacra mysteria celebranda’ express the Church’s action before God and, consequently, the sacrifice; in this respect, they contrast with the Lutheran emphasis on a liturgy in which God serves humankind through the Word and the sacrament. Nevertheless, the idea of sacrifice is simply given less prominence.

The Tridentine Offertory has been replaced by a Presentation of the Gifts in which the words and gestures of the offering have been reduced and have changed in character. Changed in character, because instead of the Tridentine ambiguity—which, in the elevation of the bread and wine, offered an ‘immaculate victim’ and a ‘cup of salvation’ as a propitiatory offering, the Presentation of the Gifts offers only bread and wine (bread and wine which, of course, will become the bread of life and the spiritual drink).³⁸

Alongside this partial reduction in the words and gestures of offering that characterised the Offertory, it should also be noted that the Presentation of the Gifts sees the disappearance of some of the previous references to Calvary. The sign of the cross when placing the paten and chalice on the altar has been omitted, as has the placing of the host on the corporal. With the removal of the ‘Sancta Suscipe Trinitas’, a reference to the memorial of the Passion has also been omitted.

Finally, the idea of propitiation appears less prominent in the Presentation of the Gifts; it is no longer stated that the bread and chalice are offered for the remission of sins or for the salvation obtained through their offering. The removal of the ‘Sancta Suscipe Trinitas’ also removes a reference to salvation. Apart from the references to the propitiatory sacrifice found in the brief and variable prayer of the ‘oblata super’, the Presentation of the Gifts makes only one mention of the propitiatory sacrifice in the response ‘Suscipiat Dominus’, which has been retained from the traditional ordo.

It is true that, despite this reduction in sacrificial and offertory terminology in the Novus Ordo, each of the three new Eucharistic prayers contains formulas of offering, as Julien Green was quick to point out. The fourth prayer contains a sacrificial formula

³⁷ **After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy**, Oxford, Blackwell, 1998.

³⁸ As regards the Lutheran liturgy, the Lutheran Frank Senn (*Christian Liturgy*, 269–272), quoting Irenaeus, approves of the offering of the fruits of the earth to the Creator within the liturgy.

which the Lutheran Frank Senn even criticises for its distinctively .³⁹ But whilst Catholic theologians were joining the Lutherans in equating the sacrifice with thanksgiving and a vague ‘remembrance-presence’ of the sacrifice, the Eucharistic prayer has lost many clear signs of Christ’s real presence on the altar here and now in a ‘state of victimhood’.⁴⁰ Although the texts of the four Eucharistic prayers contain an oblatio in the anamnesis, do they not lack some of the previous demonstrative signs of the cross which, made over the host and the chalice at the moment of the words of oblation, drew attention to Christ, the victim offered here and now, the very same Christ who is named in the anamnesis?

‘The style of solemn prose that characterised the Roman Canon favoured a manner of delivery that would have been accompanied by oratorical gestures, at least in certain schools of rhetoric within the Roman Empire. Consequently, an oratorical expression referring to an object visible to the listener would have entailed a gesture drawing attention to that object. It has been suggested that from the eighth century onwards these gestures were symbolised by the signs of the cross. In the Roman Canon, almost every time the gifts were mentioned, a sign of the cross was made. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the original gesture in the Canon was a demonstrative one, and that as such it was not recorded in the original liturgical text.’

41

The signs of the cross as demonstrative gestures emphasised the concrete existential reality of the offering on the altar here and now.

By focusing attention on the offering here and now through the signs of the cross, the priest also bore witness, in the ancient rite, to the presence of the adorable Saviour himself through the frequent genuflections which have now almost entirely disappeared. The priest’s physical gestures of rhetorical expression and adoration were intimately linked to the inaudible prayer of the Canon, in order to

³⁹ “... Medieval theologians were mistaken in equating the anamnesis-oblation with an offering of the body and blood of Christ. Whilst the text of the Roman Canon speaks only of a pure and spotless oblation in reference to the bread and wine—even though they are called the ‘bread of life’ and the ‘cup of salvation’—the Roman Eucharistic Prayer IV in the current Roman Sacramentary has, for the first time in the history of the Eucharistic prayer, referred to the oblation as the body and blood of Christ. This can only reignite the controversy over the Eucharistic sacrifice that has plagued Western Christianity since the Reformation in the 16th century. ‘Anamnesis’, in **The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship**, ed. Peter Fink, S.J., Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 1990, p. 46.

⁴⁰ Pope Pius XII, **Mediator Dei**, n. 70.

⁴¹ R. Kevin Seasoltz, “Non-Verbal Symbols and the Eucharistic Prayer,” in **New Eucharistic Prayers: An Ecumenical Study of their Development and Structure**, ed. Frank C. Senn, Paulist, New York, p. 222 (pp. 214–36). The author quotes Joseph Jungmann, **The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Developments**, vol. 2, New York, Benziger Brothers, 1955, pp. 144–45.

to create an atmosphere that expresses a manifest faith in the presence of Someone Else upon the altar. We speak of things—for example, past events that we remember—in order to extricate ourselves from their absence; thus the Canon, recited in a low voice after the Preface, which is recited aloud, and the Sanctus, accompanied by signs of adoration of Someone who is present, reinforced the newly manifested presence of Another before whom the priest represents the faithful.⁴²

These distinctions seem to highlight a different, temporal significance of the words of offering and the preceding gestures during the Offertory: through the power of semi-conscious memory and the unchanging use of the same Offertory and Canon in every Mass, Christ, the Immaculate Victim, is present in a more vivid way even within the Canon, since the Offertory ‘foretells’ the offering of an Immaculate Victim and a chalice of salvation – terms repeated after the consecration and the threefold adoration of Christ, who is now made present. Through the repetition of the single intention to offer an immaculate Victim to God, the sacrifice, now made present, has acquired a striking identity concentrated in time.

The ecumenical significance of this change is that it is now easier for Lutheran theology to interpret the Eucharistic sacrifice and the offering not as a sacrifice in the literal sense, but as a metonymy within the anamnesis. In other words, for Lutherans, the Eucharistic prayer is called an offering insofar as it recalls a historical offering on Calvary which, in a sense, becomes ‘present’ through and within the liturgical remembrance.

What takes place is not the offering of Christ to the Father by the priest and the Church, but the presence of Christ’s past offering, and this is called a ‘sacrifice’ by metonymy. When used in relation to the liturgy or the Eucharistic prayer, the term ‘offering’ is merely a way of designating the presence of Christ’s offering in the anamnesis.⁴³

By contrast, if the minister and the participants in a Eucharistic liturgy were to ‘offer’

⁴² The silence of the Canon is an ‘intense silence’, not a silence of mere meditation. It envelops *the actio*, which is carried out primarily by Another. The auditory ‘concealment’ of the Canon is the Western counterpart to the iconostasis, which veils the sanctuary during the Anaphora. By contrast, today ‘the Canon is generally not regarded by the faithful as the high point of the celebration, but rather as a lengthy section during which the presider recites a doctrinal statement’ (Seasoltz, p. 230). It should be noted that, no more than in the West, the Byzantine liturgy requires the faithful to hear the Anaphora: just as with the organ in the West and polyphonic sung Masses, the Byzantine choir may sing throughout most of the Anaphora.

⁴³ Although some Lutheran theologians approve of the simple offering of bread and wine to God, the 20th-century Lutheran liturgy we have referred to (the American **Lutheran Book of Worship**) carefully avoids offering the consecrated elements to God

repeatedly, in words and gestures; they might not be able to understand the ‘offering’ as a mere metonymy. For whilst a word used only once in a particular context may be more easily taken lightly or as a metaphor, since the Tridentine Mass offers repeatedly in both words and gestures, it appears more clearly as a ‘true and proper sacrifice’ (Council of Trent), and not as a metonymy. As verbal references to the sacrifice and the signs of the cross have now been reduced in comparison with the Tridentine Mass, this may explain why some Lutheran ecumenists see no obstacle to certain reformed Catholic rites: with the less frequent occurrence of verbal and ritual signs relating to the sacrifice and the Real Presence, and whilst Catholic theologians also propose a metonymic interpretation of the Eucharistic sacrifice, the new liturgy may be more readily interpreted by Lutheran ecumenists as an expression of metonymic sacrifice, even though this is not objectively the case and the Magisterium has made clear and definitive statements on this subject.

II Theological-Liturgical Renewal and Eucharistic Faith

We have emphasised that certain aspects of the liturgical reform are linked to an ecumenical Eucharistic theology, based on a major twentieth-century development variously known as the theology of liturgical anamnesis, thanksgiving or the mystery of the Presence. The best-known pioneering figure in this approach to the Eucharist is, of course, Odo Casel, and his theology has been widely embraced not only by Catholics but also by Lutherans.⁴⁴ Since then, Max Thurian, Louis Bouyer and other Catholic and Protestant theologians have developed theories of the Eucharistic presence of Christ’s sacrifice in the Mass based on biblical anamnesis (remembrance). Although the historical and theological arguments put forward by these theologians often differ from those of Casel, the metaphysical aspects and implications of what is sometimes called ‘the sacramental presence of the Paschal Mystery’ are similar. From an ecumenical perspective, the widely held theory of the anamnesis-mystery presence enables ‘Catholic and Evangelical’ (Lutheran) to speak of the ‘Eucharistic sacrifice’ in a metonymic sense, thereby giving the impression that consensus has been reached with the ‘Roman Catholic Church’, whereas the Tridentine doctrine on the Mass as

⁴⁴ Frank Senn (*Christian Liturgy* Aulén and Yngve Brilioth.

615–620) links Casel’s thinking to that of the 20th-century Swedish Lutherans, Gustav

Christ's offering to the Father through the ordained priest and the Church is in decline.

Some ecumenical theologians, both Catholic and Lutheran, associate the liturgical theologies of anamnesis – presence – with the new liturgy. However, not all Catholic theologians have been convinced by this theology. In this second part of our study on faith, liturgy and ecumenism, we shall first describe Casel-style theologies of the liturgy and summarise the main criticisms levelled against them. We shall then present the classical theology of the Eucharistic sacrifice, based on the Council of Trent, St Thomas Aquinas, Pius XII and Paul VI's encyclical **Mysterium Fidei**. Finally, we shall conclude our work with a study of the traditional Roman Mass to demonstrate its organic development from the universal liturgical tradition and its harmonious synthesis of authentic anamnesis, epiclesis and sacrificial offering.

A. The Eucharistic theologies of 'objective' anamnesis and the presence of the Paschal Mystery. Obviously, there can be no question here of refuting Odo Casel and certain dominant trends in Eucharistic theology that stem from his work or are similar to it. However, it is possible that such a refutation has already been made: one can survey a

of critiques of Casel in Catholic theological literature from the 1920s to 1950.⁴⁵ We shall summarise the Eucharistic theology of the 'mystery-presence' and of 'anamnesis-presence', as well as certain critical objections to it, drawing on Sacred Scripture, patristic theology and systematic theology.

In the theology of 'anamnestic-mystical presence', the past event of Calvary is vividly present in our present; the Eucharist is the real presence of the sacrifice of Christ the Saviour. This presence of a past event is often regarded as the very definition of 'sacramental presence'. By defining sacramental presence in this way and calling it 'objective remembrance', modern Eucharistic theology believes it has overcome a false dilemma: the dilemma between a purely subjective presence in memory (radical Protestantism) and a Catholic error

⁴⁵ Here is just a sample of the literature critical of Casel: Johann Baptist Umberg, "'Mysterien'-Frömmigkeit?" *Zeitschrift für Aszese und Mystik* vol. 1, 1926, pp. 351–66; Ioannes M. Hanssens, "Estne Liturgia cultus mystericus?" **Periodica de re morali, canonica, liturgica**, vol. 23, 1934, pp. *112–*132, *138–*160 (this article includes a bibliography). J. Gaillard, "La théologie des mystères," **Revue Thomiste**, vol. 57, no. 3, 1957, pp. 510–551, summarises the state of the debate after 30 years of discussion. J.-H. Nicolas, **Synthèse dogmatique**, Beauchesne, Paris, 1985, pp. 936–937, finds Casel's position contradictory. The exegete Fritz Chenderlin, *"Do This as My Memorial," *Biblicum**, Rome, 1982, pp. 71–74, finds Casel's interpretation untenable.

a popular belief in a local and ‘physical’ presence of the Body of Christ. What is ‘objectively’ present is not only the grace merited on Calvary, or the Living One Himself who was crucified and rose again, but the Paschal event itself.

The past act of salvation becomes present through a rite; through participation in this rite, the community shares in the saving act. The real presence of the Paschal event, which is expressed in the rite, is regarded as the essence of patristic teaching on the liturgical mystery.

II A.1. Anamnetic Presence in Holy Scripture?

Ever since Casel’s time, the term ‘mystical presence’ – with its questionable connection, as posited by Casel, to pagan mystery cults – has given way to ‘objective anamnesis’, based on an interpretation of the biblical and Hebrew concept of memorial. It is often said that, for the Hebrews, the celebration of the Passover not only commemorated the Exodus but also made the Exodus itself truly present to the faithful. This would be the case, in a similar way, for the death of Christ and the resurrection ‘recalled’ by the Eucharist.

Nevertheless, not all exegetes have been convinced by this interpretation of the biblical memorial and the Eucharist. Fritz Chenderlin’s exhaustive study of 1 Corinthians 11:24–25 examines several Eucharistic theologies and concludes that Casel’s ‘mystery-presence’ theory is alien to biblical thought.⁴⁶ Translating the passage in question as ‘Do this in remembrance of me’ to preserve the multiple meanings of the word anamnesis during the first century, he identifies several possible meanings for ‘my memorial’ on the Lord’s lips at the Lord’s Supper.⁴⁷ Certainly, the biblical meaning of the memorial implies more than the mere presence of Christ as an object for those who remember, since God Himself, who ‘remembers’ Christ, will be present through His power to bestow blessings in Christ’s name. But this does not necessarily imply the real presence of a past event within a present-day rite. Chenderlin considers such a notion to be alien to first-century thought. He also refuses to consider an ontological re-enactment of the Exodus event on the basis of the passage in Exodus which commands the fathers

⁴⁶ Fritz Chenderlin, *Do This as My Memorial*, Rome, Biblical Institute Press, 1982.

⁴⁷ The memorial may be one or more of the following: something by which believers remember Christ; something by which believers remember the God of Christ in order to implore divine graces; a memorial that is ‘of Christ’ insofar as it is he who established it so that it might be perpetuated eternally on earth before God’.

Israelites to tell their children at Passover what God did ‘for me’.⁴⁸ II A.2

The ‘mysterious presence’ among the Fathers?

As we have seen, a large number of Catholic and Lutheran theologians since Casel regard a certain presence of the Paschal event as a ‘liturgical teaching of the Fathers’, and this memorial of Christ’s offering is said to be the sole meaning of the offering in the Eucharistic prayer. However, many of Casel’s interpretations have been challenged by critics who saw in his work little more than a verbal analysis of the words ‘mysterion’ and

‘sacramentum’, to which insufficient attention has not always been paid. The reader may refer to some of the Catholic critiques of Casel cited above; we shall confine ourselves to examining a few questionable readings of the sources by Caselian theology.

Much has been said about the ‘Hodie’ antiphons in the Roman liturgy, particularly those of Christmas: ‘Hodie Christus natus est’ – ‘Today Christ is born’. The ‘Hodie’ and the use of the present tense are taken to mean that whenever a Christological mystery of salvation—such as his birth or crucifixion—is liturgically commemorated, the past event itself becomes present; literally, Christ is born today, because this is the day on which the Church liturgically commemorates the event.

However, the meaning of these antiphons may also be the opposite of what Casel saw in them. A recent study of the feast of Christmas in the Roman liturgy argues that its date has nothing to do with the replacement of the pagan festival of Sol Invictus; but rather that the date was chosen because it was historically accurate, according to a calculation based on 25 March, considered to be the true historical date of the Annunciation in the Eastern Churches.⁴⁹ And so the expression *hodie* need not signify the actual presence of a past event in the liturgy. It could mean ‘this day’ in the sense of an anniversary. We need only recall, in this context, the absolute importance that the early generations of Christians attached to celebrating Easter on the exact calendar date. Thus, rather than, as it were, situating a past event in time

⁴⁸ We might add that in Paul’s text, the bread and the cup represent participation, not in the Paschal event but *in the body and blood of the Lord*; that we proclaim the (past) death of the Lord and not that he is present with us.

⁴⁹ Tommaso Federici (Professor Emeritus of Biblical Theology), ‘25 December: a date in history’, *30 Jours*, no. 11, 2000, pp. 45–50.

present, the Hodie antiphons subtly reinforce the sense of the passage of historical time.⁵⁰

‘opus redemptionis nostrae exercetur’⁵¹ : for Casel, this expression implies that the event of Christ’s redemptive death becomes present in the liturgy. But is this implication truly present in the text? The expression could easily signify God’s progressive work of redeeming us—redeeming us in the subjective sense of the exercise of his power to apply to us the merits of Christ’s death, recalled in the Mass.

The theology of the ‘mysterious presence’ has also attached great importance to a passage from Sermon 74 by Saint Leo the Great (the second sermon for the Ascension): ‘Quod itaque Redemptoris nostri conspicuum fuit, in sacramenta transivit.’ Once again, the context provides a very weak basis for the interpretation made of it. For Casel and others, the expression is said to mean that the past Paschal events are still ‘real’ in today’s sacraments. However, the basic rhetorical pattern of this sermon is not the link between past events and present sacraments, but rather the contrast between what has been seen and what is believed, between what was visible and what is invisible. The immediate antecedent of the phrase ‘Quod itaque Redemptoris nostri’ appears to be the bodily presence of Christ, hidden from our sight by the Ascension and now replaced by the sacraments in which we must believe.

The passage could easily mean that it is the bodily presence of Christ or his body, rather than past events, that now becomes present under the Eucharistic signs.⁵²

Attributing the theory of the ‘mysterious presence’ to the ‘Fathers’ in general seems highly dubious when one reads Augustine’s second sermon for the eve of Easter:

‘This happened once, as you well know. And this feast renews it again as the years go by, as if it were happening over and over again . . . this happened once a

⁵⁰ Unless a textual or editorial explanation can be found, it would appear that the use of the past tense in a ‘Hodie’ context is a valid argument against Casel. See, for example, the feast of Pentecost (in the old missal), where, moreover, the prayer refers to the event not in the present tense but in the past tense.

⁵¹ Secret of the 9th Sunday after Pentecost.

⁵² Note also: ‘As the Solemnity of Easter approaches, . . . as we are about to enter the greatest of feasts, we ought to prepare ourselves by observing a fast so that we may die with him in his Passion . . . *What is our conformity to Christ other than ceasing to be what we were? Or what is the reality of the Resurrection, if not the death of the old man?*’ Sermon 50, in *St Leo the Great: Sermons*, trans. Jane Patricia Freeland and Agnes Josephine Conway, The Fathers of the Church, A New Translation, vol. 93, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1996, p. 214. Finally, ‘these great mysteries of our redemption are presented to us by the law of the seasons.’ Sermon 43, p. 188.

not just once, but the solemnity renews it for loving hearts by celebrating the feast regularly by commemorating past events, not by re-enacting them, ensuring they do not fade away; this is how we must understand what the psalm. The remembrance that is memory, knowing times past, never ceases to celebrate the solemn anniversaries... By keeping vigil, it is as though we were re-enacting the Lord's resurrection in our minds."⁵³

It seems that if Augustine had believed in a Casel-style 'mysterious presence', this sermon would have been the occasion to expound it. But instead of the real presence of the past Paschal event, he attributes the fact that the event 'does not pass away' to human memory, which he describes as the normal means by which this occurs.

We shall conclude this section by examining a passage from an Eastern Father. In the English translation, one might think he is proposing the interpretation of the memorial of the Eucharistic offering held by contemporary Lutherans, who accept Casel's idea of an 'objective memorial' whilst rejecting the Eucharist as a true and proper sacrifice. Speaking of Christ's sacrifice in his 17th homily on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Saint John Chrysostom refers to the Eucharist and says: '... not a different sacrifice like that of this high priest; we always offer the same [sacrifice], but rather (mallon) we commemorate a sacrifice'. By saying 'remembrance of a sacrifice', Chrysostom seeks to deny that we can offer any sacrifice other than that of the body of Christ offered on the cross; he does not contrast 'remembrance of the sacrifice' with 'sacrifice' but with 'another sacrifice'. Indeed, other passages in the same homily speak directly of sacrifice. The Greek word mallon is of crucial importance in the phrase 'and mallon we commemorate a sacrifice'; whilst the word mallon has been translated to convey the idea of contrast, 'rather', it can also mean 'in truth'. The context does not require it to be translated as a contrast with previous expressions; we can therefore understand that Chrysostom is simply reinforcing his response to the objection that the Eucharist is another sacrifice. Having stated that it is 'the same sacrifice', he then reinforces this by calling it a

'memorial of Calvary': 'not a different sacrifice like that of that high priest; we always offer the same [sacrifice], and in truth we commemorate a sacrifice'. He does not deny that the Eucharist is a sacrifice.

⁵³ Sermon 220, in *Sermons III/6*, The Works of Saint Augustine, A Translation for the 21st Century, trans. Edmund Hill, New City Press, New Rochelle (New York), 1993, pp. 200–201.

The fact that Chrysostom does not limit the meaning of ‘offering the sacrifice’ to ‘remembering Christ’s past sacrifice’ is confirmed by a passage in which he speaks clearly of Christ being offered by the priest in the liturgy. Urging the faithful to contemplate Christ with awe in the liturgy, his 24th Sermon on the ^{First} Epistle to the Corinthians speaks of Christ who is present and is offered by a priest, and this is compared to Christ who lay in a manger and in his mother’s arms. There is nothing to suggest that ‘offered by a priest’ should be interpreted as a metonymy for ‘offered once for all, and now present through a memorial’. The context is too realistic.

II A.3. Systematic Theology

Objections raised against Casel’s thinking are based not only on Holy Scripture and the Church Fathers, but also on dogmatic theology and metaphysics.

It seems contradictory for a past human action such as the suffering on the cross to become present in a later event in history, in our case the liturgy. Simultaneity across multiple times seems to befit the eternal God as God, to whom all existences and actions are present as they occur. This is because the relationship of simultaneity is based on the real existence of two elements; if a certain event—in this case, the Passion of Christ—no longer has real existence, then literally there is no element upon which to base a relationship of simultaneity with a later event, in this instance a liturgical act. If someone were to reply that the Passion acquires a new actual existence, this would imply that the sacrifice of the Cross is repeated, and theologians generally avoid asserting such a thing.

It is the true human nature of Christ that does not appear to be sufficiently preserved in the theory of the ‘mystical presence’ of Christ’s salvific acts. For the fact that the eternal divine person assumed a concrete human nature did not entail the attribution of divine attributes to the human nature, but rather the hypostatic belonging of a concrete human nature, with its characteristics, to a divine being. God is not changed by the Incarnation; the Passion, with its temporal place in history, was an event within the human nature (which the divine Person had assumed). Chalcedon defined that the natures remain intact; but if divine status is attributed to Christ’s human acts, they may still be present in liturgical acts, and it then appears as though the eternity of the divine nature is mingled with the human nature.

We may therefore now reiterate that this ‘mysterious presence’ or the theology of objective anamnesis appeals to many Lutherans, as it enables them to enhance the

of their liturgy – Christ’s historical sacrifice becomes ‘sacramentally present’ therein – whilst denying that the sacrifice of the Mass can be a true propitiatory and just offering of Christ to the Father through the priest and the Church. In other words, the Reformation’s classic unease regarding human action and mediation is maintained: there is no propitiatory offering by Christ here and now, but rather an immediate presence of the past event of Calvary ‘through word and sacrament’. Christ’s propitiatory offering, linked to the human virtue of justice of which religion forms part, is rejected, and the quasi-mediation of chronological time between the Mass and the Passion it commemorates disappears to some extent.

In this context, it is necessary to examine the links between Caselian theology and the intellectual framework of German Romanticism, which has been so influential on certain Catholic and Protestant theological schools. It is because Caselian categories tend to emphasise immediacy rather than mediation – the mediations of time, of the priesthood and of the virtue of religion which offers the sacrifice – that they are so highly valued by Luther’s modern heirs. At times, contemporary theologies of ‘vital contact’, the ‘living presence of the mystery’ and the Church as ‘organic communion’ seem to owe more to nineteenth-century Germany than to the Church Fathers.⁵⁴ By contrast, we might say that the traditional Roman Mass is imbued with mediation because it corresponds to the nature of man insofar as he knows through the senses, but also to the virtue of religion, and to the truly human acts of the divine Saviour, acts which can be remembered and which, as human acts, are subject to the pathos of the passing of time. Indeed, the Mass takes on a particular significance in that, through remembrance, it preserves a past event which, by definition, can never again be present in the same way.

B. Classical Tridentine theology of the Eucharistic sacrifice

In introducing a Tridentine and Thomist view of the Eucharistic sacrifice as an alternative to theories such as Casel’s, it is worth noting that, according to Casel himself, his theory provided a solution to a long-standing question in Catholic theology: how can the Mass be an adequate sacrifice offered here and now without contradicting the teaching of the Letter to the Hebrews (Christ ‘has no need to offer a sacrifice again and again’)? For Casel, the Mass is the

⁵⁴ Benoit-Dominique de la Soujeole, **The Sacrament of Communion: An Essay in Fundamental Ecclesiology**, Fribourg/Paris, Éditions Universitaires/Cerf, 1998, discusses a historical link between Romantic thought and the ecclesiologies of communion of the 20th century.

mystical presence of the true event of Calvary, and thus the problem would be resolved.

But to say, in accordance with the theology of anamnesis, that the Mass contains a sacrifice (past–present) is not necessarily equivalent to saying that the priest, as Christ’s minister, offers the sacrifice at every Mass; and Lutheran theology continues to affirm the former whilst denying the latter. In contrast to many theologies of anamnesis, we now present an alternative – Thomist and Tridentine – view of the Mass as a true and just sacrifice, an offering of Christ to God.

Let us begin with a key passage from St Thomas, which we shall comment on and expand upon:

Is the matter of this sacrament bread and wine?

[...] *On the contrary*, Pope Alexander I states: ‘In sacramental oblations, only bread and wine mixed with water are offered for the sacrifice.’

[...]2 As for the Passion of Christ, in which the blood is separated from the body; this is why, in this sacrament, which is the memorial of the Lord’s Passion, bread is taken separately as the sacrament of the Body, and wine as the sacrament of the Blood. (St. III q. 74)

It must be affirmed with complete certainty, by virtue of the foregoing exposition, that under each of the two sacramental species there is the whole body of Christ, but in a different manner in each case. For under the species of bread, there is the body of Christ by virtue of the sacrament, and his blood by virtue of real concomitance, as we have just seen with regard to his soul and his divinity. Under the species of wine, there is the blood of Christ by virtue of the sacrament, and his body by virtue of real concomitance, as well as his soul and his divinity, since the blood of Christ is now not separated from his body, as it had been at the time of his passion and death. [...]

Although the whole Christ is present under each of the two species, this is not in vain. 1 For it serves to represent the Passion of Christ, in which his blood was separated from his body. That is why, in the form of the consecration of the blood, its shedding is mentioned. [...]

That is why, in this sacrament, the blood is consecrated separately from the body, something which is not done for the other parts of that body.

St Thomas emphasises these separations, and their significance is sacrificial for the Mass itself. Because of the essential and accidental differences between bread and wine, the BODY and BLOOD of Christ are consecrated separately: separately through the distinction between presence by sacramental-verbal efficacy (the different words, ‘body’ and ‘blood’) and presence by concomitance; separately through the temporal difference between saying ‘my Body’ and saying ‘my Blood’. Present through the separate consecrations, the Body and Blood of Christ thus become present on the altar according to an IMMOLATITIUS MODUS, to borrow Cajetan’s expression, in a state of victimhood, as Pius XII stated in **Mediator Dei** (70). One might even say that the consecration of the bread and wine / Body and Blood is a memorial because it is a sacrifice. Better still, in this original divine action that is the Mass, sacrifice and representation go hand in hand; one cannot say that the Eucharist is a representation and a sacrifice merely by way of metaphor.⁵⁶

By placing His Body and Blood in a state of victimhood, Christ and His priest offer Christ to the Father. Why is this separation through the presence under separate symbols a ‘continuation’ of Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross? One might raise the objection that mere symbols—be they bread or wine or an image of the Crucifixion—cannot ‘continue’ the sacrifice represented, except metaphorically.

The answer to such an objection is transubstantiation and the substantial presence itself⁵⁷: the consecration at Mass continues Christ’s sacrifice because, unlike a painted or sculpted crucifix, the very same Body and Blood, as on the Cross, are substantially present under the separate species. Unlike a crucifix, the Body and Blood are, through the sacramental instrumental power of the priest, brought into existence under separate symbols. And because of this, this substantially present Body and Blood are truly associated with the expressed and supernaturally effective concepts of ‘Body’ and ‘shed Blood’ pronounced over them, and thereby with the

⁵⁵ St Thomas Aquinas, **Summa Theologica**, 3 vols., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. 2, Benziger Brothers, Inc., NY, 1947, 2: 2439, 2456.

⁵⁶ St Thomas states that the sacrament of the Eucharist is called a sacrifice because it is the memorial of Christ’s Passion—a sacrifice (ST, III, 73, 4; 79, 7). This does not contradict what we are saying here, as his concern and perspective are different. Writing before the Protestant rejection of the ‘sacrifice of the Mass’, St Thomas treats the Eucharist as **a sacrament**, that is to say, as a sign called a ‘sacrifice’ because it signifies and recalls a sacrifice. Since every sign signifies a reality, it can, from this perspective, refer to the Passion as a true sacrifice. Nevertheless, his thinking remains open to subsequent theological development which will regard the ‘Eucharistic Actio’ (the operation that brings about the quasi-separation of the body and blood of Christ through distinct consecrations) as a true and authentic sacrifice and not merely as the remembrance of a sacrifice.

⁵⁷ De *res*, the thing itself, not merely a representation.

a bloody separation expressed by these concepts within the context of the anticipation of Calvary through the Last Supper. The utterance of these words, by signifying the bloody separation on Calvary, brings about the IMMOLATITIUS MODUS, which consists in the substantial presence, under separate species, of the Body and Blood.

In summary, the priest has at least an implicit intention to OFFER the SACRIFICE (IMMOLARE) when he intends to pronounce these words over the bread and wine, since he intends (at least implicitly) to bring about an IMMOLATITIUS MODUS of Christ substantially present, and insofar as an IMMOLATITIUS MODUS of Christ, substantially present, is brought about, a quasi-separation or an IMMOLATIO is accomplished and the sacrifice of Calvary is ‘continued’ or ‘renewed’.⁵⁸

We can now address the classic Lutheran objection to the sacrifice of the Mass, based on the Letter to the Hebrews. The Letter states that Christ ‘has no need to offer a daily sacrifice’, but the analogy of faith with the rest of Holy Scripture and Tradition teaches us that the meaning of this expression is clarified by two other expressions: ‘for then he would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world’ and ‘And just as people die only once’. This means that the Epistle rejects the notion of a ‘repeated’ sacrifice in the sense of a mortal, bloody separation of body and blood, necessary for the forgiveness of sins, objectively offered on Calvary in accordance with God’s will for universal salvation. This would not prevent divine charity from devising a new kind of ‘true and righteous sacrifice’, namely the bloodless sacrifice of Christ in the Mass. The style of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that of a homily, with the imprecisions characteristic of the genre; consequently, we can find at least one other instance where a general term is used but understood in a specific sense. For example, in Hebrews 10:5–8, God tells Christ, through the verse from the Psalm, that He does not desire burnt offerings and ‘offerings’, whereas in verse 10 we are sanctified by the ‘offering’ of Christ’s body. There is no contradiction, for ‘offering’ in the psalm refers only to the sacrifices of the Law of Moses, not to the offering of Christ Himself. Similarly, when the Letter to the Hebrews states that Christ has no need to offer a sacrifice

⁵⁸ We must affirm, in accordance with tradition and the Council of Trent, that the Eucharist is a true and authentic sacrifice. At the same time, one might say that the bloodless sacrifice of the Eucharist would not exist without the bloody sacrifice of Calvary, for it is the verbal re-presentation of that bloody sacrifice through a narrative in the past tense, which makes the ‘IMMOLATITIUS MODUS’ of Christ’s body and blood truly present under the separate species.

In everyday terms, we can understand this to mean the bloody separation of the body and blood of a victim.

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C. The Traditional Roman Mass and the Expression of Faith

Having established a theology of the sacrifice of the Mass based on Trent, St Thomas, and the teaching of Popes Pius XII and Paul VI, we shall now conclude our study on faith, liturgy and ecumenism. As we have seen, some Catholic and Lutheran theologians have praised the recent reform for incorporating a greater degree of anamnesis and epiclesis into the Mass, elements thought to have been insufficiently present in the pre-1969 Roman Mass. However, we shall show that the Roman liturgy's emphasis on the offering incorporates elements of epiclesis and anamnesis, the latter being understood in a non-ontological sense, albeit realised in different forms based on the model of the Syro-Antiochene Anaphora so highly regarded by Catholic and Lutheran liturgical reformers of the twentieth century. The truths of faith emphasised by contemporary Lutherans and modern ecumenical Eucharistic theology are in fact present in the traditional rite, with its characteristic emphasis on the sacrificial offering.

In the tradition of the Western Syrian anaphora, more specifically in the Anaphora of Saint James of Jerusalem, the remembrance encompasses the entire 'divine' economy from creation to the Parousia. Yet the traditional Roman Mass also commemorates these truths of faith. The Offertory contains an element of anamnesis when the Passion is recalled at the moment of the offering of the bread and wine: after declaring that he is offering an immaculate Victim and a chalice of salvation, the priest makes the sign of the cross whilst placing the paten and the chalice on the altar. There is a commemoration of the Paschal Mystery—the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension—in the prayer of offering, **Suscipe sancta trinitas**. There is a commemoration of creation and redemption when the prayer for the mixing of water and wine recalls the marvellous origin of human dignity and its even more marvellous redemption. Both these commemorations have been omitted from the **Novus Ordo**. And the prayer to the Holy Spirit, 'Veni Sanctificator', which has also been omitted from the *Novus Ordo*, constitutes a call for divine power

⁵⁹ Clearly, the main argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews is not related to the Eucharist but rather to the distinction between Christ and the Mosaic priesthood. Thus, the phrase 'does not require a daily sacrifice' is found in a context concerning the offering of the sacrifice to obtain the first and universal forgiveness of sins—objective redemption—as opposed to the repeated Mosaic sacrifices, which do not procure forgiveness. On Calvary, all the grace that forgives sins was merited for us—the treasure that God destines for those who are well-disposed. But it is through the sacraments and the propitiatory sacrifice of the Mass that the graces obtained on Calvary are subjectively bestowed upon individuals in or through the Church.

descends upon the offerings and thus constitutes an epiclesis.

As Jungmann's history of the liturgy shows, the signs of the Cross made with the paten and the chalice in the Roman Offertory recall the widespread medieval Gallo-Roman custom of placing the bread and the chalice in the shape of a cross on the altar. In the medieval Byzantine rite, the bread is also brought forward to be treated as the sacrificial Lamb of God in a preliminary rite of offering, and the offerings are raised as if they were Christ himself at the gates of heaven. Thus the Offertory of the Roman Mass, so heavily criticised by liturgical reformers as a theologically problematic duplicate of the true sacramental canon, is nothing more than the Western form of a universal liturgical development in which the anamnestic words and rituals ceaselessly remind us of Christ sacrificed on Calvary and to be offered here and now. As Romano Guardini liked to point out, the liturgy is more like a game than a logical system, and so in both the East and the West, the varying temporal placement of prayers or rites such as the Offertory has never posed a problem; what is significant is the universal development of 'repeated' offerings in the Western, Byzantine and Syriac traditions.

The prayers and gestures of offering in the Roman Mass have a clear tripartite structure from the perspective of the faith: from the Offertory to the Consecration, the Consecration itself, and the offering after the Consecration. This structure resembles the method commonly taught by teachers of rhetoric: first you state what you are going to say, then you say it, and finally you state what you have just said. In the Roman Mass, the priest first states what he is doing ('offering'), then he performs it at the Consecration, and finally he states what he has just done. The present tense used for the prayers of offering need not necessarily be regarded as referring to a specific moment; it is a 'present tense that extends into the future'. They repeatedly express to God the intention to offer, an intention which is fulfilled at the repeated Consecration.⁶⁰

From this perspective, the Offertory appears as a perfectly natural development of the ancient practice of placing the offerings on the altar during the Secret. As the layperson or appointed minister approached the altar with the offerings of bread and wine, they found themselves standing before God with something in their hands, and nothing was more natural than to offer them, wishing to be seen by their Lord as setting these things aside to specifically acknowledge their status, and to present them

⁶⁰ Cf. 'In a bloodless representation of the sacrifice of the cross... the Lord is immolated after the words of consecration; he begins to be sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine to become the spiritual food of the faithful.' Paul VI, Encyclical Letter **Mysterium Fidei** 34 (emphasis added).

and to implore divine blessing. He knew that only the very best was to be given to God, and so he offered ‘immaculate victims’. At the same time, he would not have offered these ‘immaculate’ hosts of bread ‘immaculate’ offerings if they were not to become the Immaculate Victim. We therefore observe a necessary ambiguity in the Offertory, which expresses man’s attitude before God: he wishes to honour Him through sacrifice and does so in reality, yet whilst being fully aware that his effort has value only if it is transformed through transubstantiation into the truly perfect Victim.

It is in this context that we also understand the significance of the priestly character, which is defined as a (instrumental) potestas over the body of Christ. For offering a gift implies that the thing given ‘belongs’ in some way to the one who offers it. It therefore seems natural to many contemporary Protestant theologians that the Christian should offer to God the fruits of his labour in the world to which he belongs. But they cannot understand that Christ can truly be offered. One might indeed reply that an offering presupposes some possession of that which is offered, and that this, in the priest, is the priestly character of valid ordination: a potestas super corpus Christi, an instrumental power—subject to divine power—to make Christ present here and now through transubstantiation, in the state of a victim.⁶¹

Returning to the theme of the memorial, we may say that the Roman Canon indirectly contains a reference to the Incarnation. Through the prayer ‘Communicantes et memoriam venerantes’, the Incarnation of our Lord and God Jesus Christ follows from the commemoration of his mother, the glorious and ever-virgin Mary. The life and ministry of Christ are indirectly recalled through the mention of his twelve apostles, each of whom is remembered by name. (In the first Eucharistic Prayer of the Novus Ordo, the commemoration of the Twelve is optional.)

The consecration in the canon is a dramatically intense commemoration. The priest’s gesture—not only of taking the bread or the chalice, but also of raising his eyes and offering a blessing in what is presumed to be an imitation of Christ’s actions as recounted in the past—focuses attention on a unique historical event that took place in its own time, in the past. Then suddenly the recalled past gives way to the present of the consecration, when the priest, with his head bowed, pronounces, *deliberately and distinctly*, the words ‘This . . .’—words which the rubrics call *verba consecrationis*; as ‘words of

⁶¹ Protestantism denies this. And even if certain validly ordained German or Swedish Lutheran reformers, such as Luther, were able to ordain validly in the 16th century, their ceremonies removed all reference to sacrifice as the purpose of the priesthood. These ordinations are therefore invalid for the same reasons that led Leo XIII to declare Anglican ordinations invalid.

‘consecration’—these words, and the same applies to the chalice, are the words of the Lord ‘spoken at the Last Supper’, but they are also effective here and now. And the priest genuflects immediately after each consecration to adore Him who has become present here and now. The symbolic expressiveness of the consecration in the traditional Roman Mass is largely due to this juxtaposition of a past event and a miraculous present—a juxtaposition, it should be noted, which preserves the past in its entirety as a past that is the object of remembrance. Thus, the ‘Unde et memores’, which formulates the offering of the Immaculate Victim, constitutes a rich anamnesis of the Paschal Mystery – Passion, Resurrection and Ascension.

It should be noted that the ‘Unde et memores’ is grammatically an oblation which also commemorates, insofar as the oblation is the subject of the main clause and the anamnesis occurs in a subordinate clause. Although the new liturgy sought to enrich the Latin Eucharistic Prayer with an anamnesis inspired by sources such as the Anaphora of Saint James, even duplicating the anamnesis by inserting a commemorative acclamation by the faithful, the Anaphora of Saint James nonetheless constitutes an anamnesis that is grammatically subordinate to the oblation; and, like the traditional Roman Mass, the Liturgy of Saint James as a whole contains numerous references to the oblation.⁶²

In this context, it must be acknowledged that although the Didache and the Martyrdom of Saint Justus clearly regard the Eucharist as an oblation, many early manuscripts of anaphora lack an oblation text, presenting only an anamnesis. However, the fact that the oblation appears in the manuscripts only at a later date should not be interpreted as meaning that the remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice is fundamental and that the ‘offering’ exists only insofar as the remembrance relates to an offering. Christ said, ‘*Do this in remembrance of me*’.

The commandment comprises two elements: doing and remembering. Once the priest has spoken these words over the bread and wine, he has done what he was to do; it is then time to move on to remembrance, and this is why all liturgies continue with an anamnesis. Remembrance, an act of the mind performed through anamnestic words, is so minor a matter here that it must be added after the action—an action which has always been implicitly understood as a sacrificial act. Thus, in the third century, and perhaps earlier, the priest emphatically states what he has just done:

⁶² Cf. *The Liturgy of Saint James*, critical edition of the Greek text with Latin translation, B.-Ch. Mercier, Brepols, Turnhout, 1974.

the offering of the sacrifice. We see the full significance of the fact that the oblation is grammatically fundamental, whilst the anamnesis becomes grammatically subordinate.

Only the intention to offer the sacrifice in the proper sense—and not merely metaphorically through the remembrance of a past sacrifice—can explain the proliferation of prayers of oblation that took place in both the East and the West, without any tendency to assert that ‘the offering of the sacrifice’ is merely a metonymy within an anamnesis.

Even the third-century Chaldean anamnesis, which contains no oblation, alludes not only to the events connected with Christ, but also to the ‘wonderful mystery’ at the altar; the priest knew that the bread and wine were in reality the Body of the divine Lord and His Blood, and, knowing that he played a part in this transformation, the clergy of the Chaldean rite came to recognise the Body and Blood as being in a state of sacrifice. As the Chaldean liturgy came to incorporate a large number of priestly formulas and oblations, the priest continually stated what he had done or was about to do—in effect, the offering of the sacrifice. In short, nothing in the text suggests that the added formulas for the offering of the sacrifice constitute a metonymy within the anamnesis. The absence of oblation in the early manuscripts is not necessarily a sign that the priest’s oblation is merely an expression, in the form of an anamnesis, of Christ’s oblation; it could simply mean that the early Christians felt the greatest awe when they contemplated the greatest event commemorated by this offering, namely the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, which were still chronologically recent.⁶³

The glorious second coming of Christ after the Ascension is an event traditionally commemorated in the Eastern anaphora. Whereas the Antiochene Anaphora or the recently composed Anaphora of Paul VI commemorate the (second) coming of Christ returning in his glory, the Roman Canon refers to divine glory itself (*praeclarae majestati tuae*) before which the sacrifice is offered.

Divine creation is implicitly recalled in the Canon when the priest offers the spotless Victim *from* ‘*tuis donis ac datis*’. It is worth noting that a liturgical improvement could have been made

⁶³ The historical data presented here are taken from Jean-Paul Montminy, ‘L’offrande sacrificielle dans l’anamnèse des liturgies anciennes’, **Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques**, 50 (1966), pp. 389–406, and, for the Chaldean liturgy, from **The Liturgy of the Holy Apostles Addai and Mari**, London, 1893, (reprinted by AMS Press, New York, 1970), and A. Gelston, **The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari**, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992. I have demonstrated that, in the light of the overall development of oblation within the liturgy, the historical evidence can be interpreted differently from Montminy’s approach.

organic within the Roman Mass by restoring the presence of naturally created things in the sanctuary at the time of the blessings that conclude the canon, ‘Par quem haec omnia, Domine, semper bona creas ...’ (whereas the 1969 Missal inserted Jewish table blessings for creation in place of the medieval Offertory prayers for ‘hanc hostiam immaculatam’ and ‘calicem salutaris’).

The cross is recalled through the signs of the cross made over the Immaculate Victim and the chalice of eternal salvation. The remembrance of Calvary through these signs is multiplied: in the Benedictus, which recalls Christ’s entry into Jerusalem to offer himself as a sacrifice; and throughout the Canon and Communion.

It is true that the Roman Canon lacks the invocation of the Holy Spirit so widespread in other rites or sub-rites. But whilst modern liturgists debate the relative merits of a pre-consecration, a post-consecration or a ‘shared’ invocation, the essence of the epiclesis—the invocation of divine blessing to bring about a supernatural effect—is prominent in the five parts of the Canon’s verbal and ritual invocation to God, to bless the offerings just before consecration.

The sign of blessing with the cross in the ‘Supplices te rogamus’ after the consecration also constitutes an epiclesis, a call for divine graces upon those who are about to receive Holy Communion .⁶⁴

The Spirit, with whom sanctification is traditionally associated and who is invoked by the epiclesis in so many of the Church’s anaphora, would not be Holy if he were not God. This is what accounts for the diversity of epicleses in the liturgical tradition: whether it is God who is invoked in the Roman Canon, or the Logos in the ancient Egyptian Anaphora of Serapion, or, more commonly, the Holy Spirit, it is always God who is invoked to bless the offerings.

It has often been claimed that the epicleses in the Pauline Eucharistic prayers remedy an insufficient presence of the Holy Spirit in the traditional Mass, and twentieth-century theology has frequently asserted that the Western Church lacked a pneumatology. It is important to note that the calendar of the Tridentine Missal included a High Mass for the Vigil of Pentecost, whose Scripture readings situated Pentecost within the entire economy of salvation and whose prayers emphasised man’s absolute need for the grace of the Holy Spirit. The traditional Mass invokes the Holy Spirit throughout the entire octave of Pentecost, whereas the reformed calendar, for its part,

⁶⁴ It has been claimed that this prayer was a consecratory epiclesis. But it could also be interpreted as follows: he asks God to lift the sacrifice up to heaven, not to transform it into the Body of Christ, but so that it may be seen by God, who is far away in the heavens. (cf. ‘*sublime altare tuum*’; ‘*in conspectu divinae majestatis tuae*’). An ancient image of divine distance expresses God’s eternity, whilst the image of angels informing God of earthly events symbolises omniscience. The angels who inform are mentioned in the Benedictine Rule of the 6th century

has abolished this octave, shifting us from the high point of Pentecost Sunday to a Monday in a week ‘Ordinary Time’. Furthermore, the traditional calendar refers to summer and autumn as a time ‘after Pentecost’, thus fulfilling Yves Congar’s oft-repeated statement that the entire life of the Church is an epiclesis of the Holy Spirit.

The explicit references to the Holy Spirit that are lacking in the traditional Roman Mass are amply compensated for by its prayers asking for ‘grace’, for grace is described in terms such as gentleness, anointing and dew—terms which, phenomenologically speaking, are similar to the classical Christian descriptions of the Holy Spirit.

Complementing the Eastern liturgies, with their frequent references to the Holy Spirit himself as the source of sanctification, the ancient Roman Mass develops the theology of created sanctifying grace, which is truly inherent in the soul.

For some twentieth-century liturgical reformers, the question of the epiclesis was linked to the conviction that the Eucharistic liturgy must manifest and highlight the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as acting separately in the history of creation, redemption and eschatological salvation. In this, these liturgists were inspired by the structure of the Eastern anaphora. However, the Old Roman Mass contains several Trinitarian references, many of which were removed in the recent reform. Firstly, one may point to the Trinitarian Gloria Patri in the prayers at the foot of the altar. (The removal of this Gloria Patri in the Novus Ordo may be compensated for by the optional Trinitarian salutations in the 1969 Ordo.) Secondly, we find the Trinity prominently present in the Offertory: the Trinitarian conclusion to the prayer for the mixing of water and wine; the Gloria Patri after the Lavabo psalm; the Suscipe prayer addressed to the Trinity; the Trinitarian conclusion of the Secret Prayer.⁶⁵ The most common Sunday preface in the Tridentine Missal is, of course, the Preface of the Holy Trinity. The Libera nos prayer, following the Pater Noster, concludes with a Trinitarian conclusion. The second prayer for Communion clearly refers to the ‘economic Trinity’: Domine Jesus Christe, Fili Dei vivi, qui ex voluntate Patris, cooperante sancto Spiritu per mortem tuam mundum vivificasti . . . In the Novus Ordo, this prayer is optional, and even when it is recited, its Trinitarian conclusion has been omitted. Finally, the Postcommunion concluded with a Trinitarian formula, and the priest recited the prayer ‘Placeat tibi, Sancta Trinitas’ before kissing the altar and giving his blessing.

⁶⁵ The prayer ‘super oblata’ in the current rite replaces the Trinitarian formula of the secret prayer with the non-Trinitarian conclusion ‘Per Christum’.

It is true that a large proportion of the Trinitarian references in the Roman Mass would not be considered adequate by some contemporary liturgists, since, with one exception (the Communion prayer *Domine Jesu Christe*), they do not present the ‘economic’ Trinity. But once again, one might ask whether their attitude does not reveal a lack of goodwill towards the contribution of the Church’s Western tradition: the Trinity is not absent from the Roman Mass, but is presented in a manner that complements that of the ‘economic Trinity’ of the Eastern rites *ux*.⁶⁶ The Roman Mass emphasises the eternity and unity of God, His Son and the Holy Spirit. The Preface of the Holy Trinity, which is frequently prescribed, evokes the theophanies of the Old Testament (*quod enim de tua gloria revelante te*). The metaphysical mysteries of this Preface invite the minds of the faithful to humbly recognise that the object of faith is, ultimately, what the incomprehensible God knows of Himself, revealed supernaturally. The way in which the Roman Mass presents the Trinity reminds us that the salvation wrought by the ‘economic Trinity’ is the perpetual vision by the elect of the ‘immanent’ Trinity.

Finally, it has been said that the old Roman Mass lacked any reference to Christ’s future return in glory, an essential part of the Paschal mystery which is commemorated. It was apparently thought that the Roman Mass did not pay sufficient attention to the future. But here too, the Roman Mass highlights a different aspect of the same mystery celebrated in the East: whilst the Eastern liturgy emphasises the coming of Christ, the Roman Mass elaborates on the reasons for Christ’s future return – to inaugurate his eternal reign on earth – through the frequent expression ‘*qui tecum vivit et regnat Deus... per omnia saecula saeculorum*’. And the future is present through a remembrance of the past at every Communion: recalling the past Crucifixion with the sign of the cross, the priest prays that the Body of Christ may lead the communicant to eternal life (the remembrance of the Cross and the eschatological reference are absent from the *Novus Ordo* Communion formula).

Conclusion

Having demonstrated how the classical Roman Mass contains, in its own way, a large part of the expressions of faith rediscovered by 20th-century liturgical theology, we can now draw some conclusions from our study.

⁶⁶ In reality, the Eastern liturgical presentation of the Trinity does not always assign roles to the different Persons. One need only think of the entrance proclamation: ‘Blessed be the kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’, or the phrase introducing the singing of the Creed to the consubstantial and undivided Trinity.

Firstly, whilst we must recognise in the liturgical reform an effort to enrich the Roman liturgy, we must lament a impoverishment resulting from the reduction of precisely those elements that were rejected by the Lutheran Reformation: the emphasis on the adoration of Christ truly present under the Eucharistic species and on the Mass as Christ's propitiatory offering to the Father through the priest and the Church. Of course, the Magisterium's position on these matters is clear, and the Novus Ordo can be celebrated with reverence and piety. But in a context of theological confusion, whilst our separated brethren find it difficult to clearly appreciate the Catholic exposition of the faith, it would be beneficial to restore those concrete liturgical elements which are lacking in a Lutheran liturgy, however dignified and beautiful it may be.

In parallel with the liturgical reform, the doctrine of the Mass as a propitiatory sacrifice has undergone a shift amongst certain Catholic theologians, who have brought it largely into line with Lutheran Eucharistic theology. Consequently, officially accredited ecumenists now envisage full sacramental and ministerial communion between Catholics and Lutherans, without Lutherans needing to accept the teaching of Trent on transubstantiation and on the Mass as a true and proper sacrifice.

Undoubtedly, the theological and liturgical renewal of the twentieth century has enabled the rediscovery of great riches for the faith and its expression through the study of ancient and Eastern sources. And it is true that the presence of these riches in a different form was not sufficiently recognised in the Roman rite codified by Saint Pius V.

It therefore appears that the celebration of the traditional Roman Mass serves the cause of true unity by upholding the truths it contains. Its emphasis on the priesthood and the sacrifice helps to dispel the illusions of certain ecumenists who wish to declare full communion between the Catholic priesthood and the invalid Lutheran ministry that exists, which does not even wish to be regarded as a priesthood.