"Joseph Mudd carefully works with Bernard Lonergan's epistemology and metaphysics to achieve what the Jesuit foundational theologian only outlined with regard to eucharistic theology. The results should make for welcomed reading among Lonergan scholars and all concerned with philosophically grounding the fundamentals of Christian belief and practice."

—Bruce T. Morrill, SJ
Vanderbilt University

"In this book, Joseph Mudd brings the insights of Bernard Lonergan to bear on the field of sacramental theology, providing an appreciative but important critique of the significant achievement of French theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet. Responding to both old and new questions in that field, Mudd's work is satisfying and challenging. This book will more than repay the efforts of those who open its pages again and again."

—Timothy Brunk, PhD
Associate Professor of Theology
Villanova University

"This book heralds a major step forward in sacramental theology and especially in the theology of the Eucharist. Mudd deftly proposes that the critical realism of Bernard Lonergan, opening on an ontology of meaning, enables an integration of the best of such hermeneutical approaches as that of Chauvet with a correct understanding of the metaphysical proposals of Aquinas. The dialogical and irenic approach that critiques Chauvet's work in the context of basic appreciation is exemplary."

—Robert M. Doran
Marquette University

Eucharist as Meaning

Critical Metaphysics and Contemporary Sacramental Theology

Joseph C. Mudd

A Michael Glazier Book

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For my parents,
Margaret and John

Contents

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Introduction

A controversy over how to talk about the presence of Christ in the Eucharist reemerged at the time of the Second Vatican Council. From the time of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) the doctrinal tradition had identified the presence of Christ in the Eucharist in terms derived from scholastic metaphysics. Accordingly, in the Eucharist, Christ is present by way of a substantial conversion of bread and wine into his body and blood, or transubstantiation, and communion with Christ in the eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass operates as an instrumental cause to sanctify the faithful. These doctrines remain at the center of Catholic sacramental theology today.[1] But the language of the doctrines is increasingly obscure in contemporary

[1] See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: "For the liturgy, through which 'the work of our redemption takes place,' especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is supremely effective in enabling the faithful to express in their lives and portray to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true church" (no. 2); "To accomplish so great a work Christ is always present in his church, especially in liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass both in the person of his minister, 'the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross' [Trent, 22.2], and most of all in the eucharistic species. . . . In the liturgy the sanctification of women and men is given expression in symbols perceptible by the senses and is carried out in ways appropriate to each of them" (no. 7); "From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain, and our sanctification in Christ and the glorification of God to which all other activities of the church are directed, as toward their end, are achieved with maximum effectiveness" (no. 10). Translations from Austin Flannery, *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents, Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations* (Northport, NY: Costello, 1996). See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1076–1109; 1322–1405.

cultures, which are no longer familiar with medieval metaphysics. Furthermore, many hold the doctrine of transubstantiation especially responsible for corrupted liturgical practices. For example, George Pattison argues:

> The doctrine and the practices it gave rise to or endorsed led to the disruption of the narrative and historical integrity of the founding text of Eucharistic life, enacting an understanding of the Church that was ahistorical and hierarchical. Thus it effectively removed the chalice from the public rite, transformed the host into a visual object, reinforced the silencing of the accompanying word and mapped the spatial coordinates of the hierarchization of the Church's life by emphasizing the exclusiveness of the sanctuary and defining public space through a cult of processional liturgies.[2]

Others have argued that the Catholic understanding of eucharistic sacrifice has been subject to "massive misunderstandings . . . that have at times veiled rather than revealed what the sacrifice of Christ, and what authentic Christian sacrifice is really all about."[3] Still others might inquire simply: "Aren't these doctrines just plain embarrassing for Catholics?"[4]

In order to give a defense of the relevant doctrinal formulae, theologians have traditionally appealed to metaphysical accounts of substance and accidents, time and eternity, cause and effect. The question emerged in the twentieth century whether metaphysics is an adequate language to explain

[2] George Pattison, "After Transubstantiation: Blessing, Memory, Solidarity and Hope," in *Deconstructing Radical Orthodoxy: Postmodern Theology, Rhetoric, and Truth*, ed. Wayne J. Hankey and Douglas Hedley (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 149–60, here at 149–50.

[3] Robert J. Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (New York and London: T & T Clark, 2009), 4.

[4] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972). Lonergan refers to the embarrassment many contemporaries feel over the language of doctrine: "Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company" (p. 299). See P. J. Fitzpatrick, *In Breaking of Bread: The Eucharist and Ritual* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially 178ff. See also Laurence Paul Hemming, "After Heidegger: Transubstantiation," 299–309, in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, ed. Lieven Boeve and Lambert Leisjssen (Leuven: Peeters, 2001); previously printed in *Heythrop Journal* 41 (2000): 170–86 (published online 2002). Hemming argues that it is the very embarrassment that demands that we take up the question of transubstantiation again, especially in a postmodern context "after Heidegger," that is, after Heidegger's "critique has been carried out and is operative in discourse" (p. 308).

what is more than anything else a ritual practice and religious experience. Historically, metaphysical explanations of eucharistic change and sacramental causality have set the complicated world of religious experience aside as too subjective. Classical treatises also tended to extract the Eucharist from the rest of the liturgy with its complex ritual mediations of meaning. As a result, questions about the presence of Christ in the Eucharist were answered without reference to the liturgical life of the church. But the Eucharist does not exist in isolation. The emergence of liturgical theology as a distinct discipline encouraged new ways of thinking about the Eucharist as part of the prayer of the church, which took the performative dimension of ritual seriously as a site for theological reflection.[5] Categories like "symbol" and "sacrament" were recast in ways that responded to the subjective and performative dimension of religious experience.

A variety of approaches, some drawing on existentialism, others on phenomenology, and still others on postmodern thought, offered new ways of thinking about the Eucharist.[6] Edward Schillebeeckx, recognizing that sacraments are signs, and that bread and wine also function for human beings as signs, proposed thinking about the Eucharist in terms of

[5] See Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992).

[6] The various interpretations of eucharistic doctrine that emerged around the Second Vatican Council prompted Pope Paul VI to issue the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* in 1965, effectively reasserting the classical doctrines promulgated at the Council of Trent despite the changes in the liturgy encouraged by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. In the encyclical Pope Paul suggests that criticisms of the dogma of transubstantiation "are disturbing the minds of the faithful and causing them no small measure of confusion about matters of faith" (*MF* 10). He continues by referring to emerging interpretations of the doctrine of transubstantiation: "It is not permissible . . . to discuss the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning what the Council of Trent had to say about the marvelous conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body and the whole substance of the wine into the Blood of Christ, as if they involve nothing more than 'transignification,' or 'transfinalization' as they call it" (*MF* 11). Since the promulgation of *Mysterium Fidei* a debate has continued among Catholic theologians over the best way to understand eucharistic doctrines. Further complicating our understanding of the doctrines is the fact that this theological debate is intertwined with an ongoing controversy over the shape of the liturgy in the post–Vatican II church. For a discussion of this controversy, see John Baldovin, *Reforming the Liturgy: A Response to the Critics* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008).

"transignification."[7] Karl Rahner's theology of the symbol explained the presence of Christ in the Eucharist in terms of his category *Realsymbol*, arguing that unlike signs, which refer to something else, the Eucharist effects what it signifies.[8] Robert Sokolowski's theology of disclosure—grounded in Edmund Husserl's phenomenology—attends to the many ways in which Christ is present in the liturgy, restoring the phenomenal after modernity's assault on appearance as illusion.[9] Louis-Marie Chauvet elaborates a theology of symbolic mediation grounded in Martin Heidegger that identifies the presence of Christ in the Eucharist as absence.[10] Jean-Luc Marion criticizes theories of transignification for sliding into an idolatry of the collective subject and argues that the presence of Christ as pure gift is secured by the theology of transubstantiation, which "alone offers the possibility of distance."[11] Matthew Levering joins Marion in criticizing Schillebeeckx and others for advocating "eucharistic idealism," while offering a defense of Thomas Aquinas against his modern critics and an interpretation of eucharistic sacrifice grounded in Jewish tradition.[12] Each of these approaches is worthy of study, but the present work turns to the potential contribution of Bernard Lonergan's methodology for eucharistic theology.

While Lonergan rarely mentions the sacraments or the liturgy in his major works, we do find him exploring the area of sacramental and espe-

[7] See Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, trans. N. D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968).

[8] See Karl Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," *Theological Investigations IV*, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon, 1966), 221–52. See also Stephen M. Fields, *Being as Symbol: On the Origins and Development of Karl Rahner's Metaphysics* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2000).

[9] See Robert Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1994). See also Robert Sokolowski, "The Eucharist and Transubstantiation," *Communio* 24 (December 1, 1997): 867–80.

[10] See Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans, Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 7; original French publication *Symbole et Sacrament: Un relecture sacramentelle de l'existance chrétienne* (Paris: Cerf, 1987). See also Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001).

[11] See Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), here at 177.

[12] See Matthew Levering, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

cially eucharistic theology in some important early works, for example, "The Notion of Sacrifice"[13] and "Finality, Love, Marriage."[14] As Frederick Crowe has noted, however, much of Lonergan's early work on sacramental theology is positive theology or collections of theological opinions on the subject for his students.[15] Although these brief works in sacramental theology hold some insights, it is Lonergan's metaphysics, theological anthropology, and Christology that will inform our interpretation of eucharistic doctrines. Lonergan spent most of his career laying the groundwork for bringing Catholic theology up to date by focusing on the question of method, both in cognitional theory broadly and in theological inquiry more specifically. For Lonergan this primarily meant jettisoning the logically rigorous metaphysics characteristic of a classical culture concerned with the universal and necessary as a point of departure. Instead, theology on the level of our era must attend first to method and only subsequently to metaphysics if it is to speak to modern cultures that are concerned with the particular and concrete.[16]

Lonergan laid out his program in brief when he wrote: "So today in a world whence classicist culture has vanished, we have before us the task of understanding, assimilating, penetrating, transforming modern culture."[17] However, Lonergan also recognized the challenge this task presents to theology:

> Classical culture cannot be jettisoned without being replaced; and what replaces it cannot but run counter to classical expectations. There is bound to be formed a solid right that is determined to live in a world that no longer exists. There is bound to be formed a scattered left, captivated by now this, now that new development, exploring now

[13] Bernard Lonergan, "The Notion of Sacrifice," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 19 (2001): 3–34, repr. with the original Latin in *Early Latin Theology, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (CWBL) 19, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011) 3–51.

[14] Bernard Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 17–52, in *Collection*, CWBL 4, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

[15] See Frederick E. Crowe, *Christ in History: the Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1935 to 1982* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2005), 41. Lonergan was responsible for teaching sacramental theology to seminarians in 1942–1943.

[16] Bernard Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," 149–63, in *A Second Collection: Papers By Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), at 161. See also in the same volume "Theology in its New Context," 55–67.

[17] Bernard Lonergan, "The Future of Thomism," *A Second Collection*, 43–53, at 44.

> this and now that new possibility. But what will count is a perhaps not numerous center, big enough to be at home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half measures and insist on complete solutions even though it has to wait.[18]

Nowhere is Lonergan's observation more incisive than in the area of eucharistic theology. Since the Second Vatican Council a scattered left has offered a variety of ways to move beyond the restrictions of medieval and Renaissance eucharistic doctrines by appealing to contemporary philosophy, historical criticism, and ritual studies. On the other hand, a "solid right" has stepped in to restate the traditional doctrines and even to argue for a "reform of the reform."[19] The center is not numerous, and the transitions remain to be made.

The goal here, then, is to assess the contemporary theological context and to execute some of the transitions needed in the area of eucharistic theology. I turn to Lonergan because his philosophical and theological investigations hold untapped resources for illuminating the meaning of Catholic eucharistic doctrines.[20] His work helps us to answer these systematic theological questions: (1) What does it mean to say that the bread and wine of eucharistic worship are converted into the body and blood of Christ through transubstantiation? (2) Why is the Mass called a sacrifice? And how is it related to Christ's sacrifice? (3) What does a sacrament, especially the Eucharist, "do"? How does it "make" human beings holy?[21]

[18] Bernard Lonergan, "Dimensions of Meaning," 232–45, in *Collection*, CWBL 4, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), at 245.

[19] See, for example, Thomas M. Kocik, *The Reform of the Reform? A Liturgical Debate; Reform or Return* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003).

[20] I am not alone in making use of Lonergan's work to illumine questions in liturgical theology. The works of Stephen Happel and Raymond Moloney have provided invaluable insight into the questions that drive the present work. Others who have contributed important studies of Lonergan in relation to sacramental theology include Philip McShane, Giovanni Sala, Margaret Kelleher, Peter Beer, and Michael Stebbins.

[21] Note that questions of presence, sacrifice, and grace are treated together. As with a knot, if we pull on one thread without attending to the others the knot will only get tighter and more difficult to loosen. We treat the three questions together in order to avoid the perils that too-exclusive attention to one thread can cause. See Joseph M. Powers, *Eucharistic Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 42, where Powers

In order to clarify Lonergan's position by contrast, I begin in chapter 1 with Louis-Marie Chauvet. Chauvet offers "the first radically different sacramental theology to come out of Europe since the existential-phenomenological transformation of neo-scholastic thinking wrought by Rahner and Schillebeeckx over thirty years ago, and for that reason alone it deserves serious attention."[22] In addition, Chauvet's influence among theology faculties has grown since the publication of *Symbol and Sacrament*, as has his postmodern critical exegesis of classical sacramental theology. Our particular concern in this work will be with Chauvet's methods, especially whether his appropriation of the Heideggerian critique of onto-theology offers an accurate account of the tradition and a fruitful way forward in eucharistic theology.

In chapters 2 and 3 I turn to Lonergan in order to discover a metaphysics capable of bringing Catholic eucharistic theology up to date by offering a method for transposing traditional eucharistic doctrines into categories that communicate to a contemporary culture. These chapters build on J. Michael Stebbins's article "Eucharist: Mystery and Meaning," where he argues that "for all its shortcomings, the idea of transubstantiation rests on a valid insight into what we mean when we affirm that bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. The problem is to re-capture that insight, but to do so within the context of a metaphysics grounded in a verifiable account of human knowing."[23] Stebbins refers to the metaphysics presented by Lonergan in *Insight*, where he proposes a derived metaphysics that avoids the onto-theological problematic that Chauvet, echoing Heidegger, rightly criticizes. Lonergan's critical groundwork attends to the problems of bias and the polymorphism of human consciousness, leading to a heuristic

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argues: "the [Council of Trent's] disparate emphasis on real presence, communion and the sacrifice of the Mass as three rather unrelated values in the Eucharist set the tone for the theology of the Eucharist and Eucharistic piety for several centuries." The key to understanding the doctrines of the Eucharist is to explain how they relate to each other. See also Edward Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998/2004), 170: "The teaching of the council on [transubstantiation] was presented in such a way that it merely affirmed this real presence without situating it in the context of the whole Eucharistic event."

[22] Joseph Martos, "Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence," *Horizons* 23/2 (Fall 1996): 345–46.

[23] Michael Stebbins, "The Eucharistic Presence of Christ: Mystery and Meaning," *Worship* 64 (1990): 225–36, at 226.

metaphysics rather than a tidy conceptual system. That heuristic metaphysics is articulated in chapter 3, which makes the turn from cognitional theory and epistemology to the elements of critical realist metaphysics.

Chapter 4 deals with two issues: (1) theological foundations and (2) categories of meaning. When Lonergan treats the functional specialty "Foundations" in *Method in Theology* he explains that the foundational reality is religious, moral, and intellectual conversion.[24] If there is confusion today over the meaning and relevance of doctrines it is partly due to a failure to come to terms with the importance of intellectual conversion in theological reflection. This is especially the case in sacramental theology, which can veer off in the directions of either magic or skepticism. Attending to the roles of conversion and authenticity as foundations in sacramental theology will help to make sense of the doctrinal statements of the church about the Eucharist. Lonergan's elaboration of the categories of meaning facilitates a transposition of metaphysical terms and relations employed in eucharistic doctrines into categories of meaning without abandoning metaphysics.

Chapter 5 proposes an understanding of eucharistic doctrines grounded in Lonergan's critical realist metaphysics and transposed into categories of meaning.[25] Rather than separating eucharistic presence and eucharistic sacrifice, I will treat them in an integrated fashion in order to get at the meaning communicated by the rite. There has been a tendency historically to understand the presence of Christ in the sacramental species as the condition for the possibility of eucharistic sacrifice. In this way of thinking the priest first confects the sacramental presence of Christ, the spotless victim made present by the miracle of transubstantiation, and then, by breaking the bread, reenacts the sacrifice of Calvary. This interpretation does not agree with the tradition, especially the theology of Thomas Aquinas, who clarifies that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is the presence of Christ at Calvary—the presence of the sacrifice. Having clarified the doctrines of transubstantiation and sacrifice through an application of Lonergan's metaphysics and Christology, I propose understanding sacramental causality in terms of mediation of meaning.

[24] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 267.

[25] Neil Ormerod has laid out a general strategy for the transposition in "Transposing Theology into the Categories of Meaning," *Gregorianum* 92, no. 3 (2011): 517–32.

A Note on Method

While assessing a contemporary shift in the area of Christology, Lonergan once remarked: "In an age of novelty method has a twofold function. It can select and define what was inadequate in former procedures and, at the same time, indicate the better procedures that have become available. But it may also have to discern the exaggerations or deficiencies to which the new age itself is exposed."[26] Sacramental theologians today, Chauvet chief among them, often attempt to deal with eucharistic doctrines in new ways with new methods. Today we find certain "exaggerations and deficiencies" in contemporary sacramental theology that present an opportunity for further reflection on the methods that will lead it into the third millennium. Moving into the third millennium involves coming to a renewed understanding of the dogmatic statements that form the tradition of Christian teaching. Today some theologians pronounce certain dogmas meaningless; nevertheless, the questions those dogmas attempted to answer are meaningful questions, and they continue to be asked by the faithful.

There is indeed much in the history of theological doctrines on the Eucharist that is inadequate and in need of further development, but there are also genuine insights in the tradition that can be transposed for a new age. Accomplishing that transposition will take time. The sacramental doctrines of the past were conceived and communicated according to categories derived from a logically controlled metaphysics. But Lonergan argues, and I agree, that "in our time of hermeneutics and history, of psychology and critical philosophy, there is an exigence for further development. There are windows to be opened and fresh air to be let in. It will not, I am convinced, dissolve the solid achievement of the past. It will, I hope, put that achievement on a securer base and enrich it with a fuller content."[27] Establishing a "securer base" for the "solid achievement of the past" demands a new philosophy, and enriching the past with a "fuller content" requires that we attend to interiority and religious experience. In his own time Lonergan recognized that scholasticism was on the way out, and that neoscholasticism was a dead end. He wrote:

[26] Bernard Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," 74–99, in *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), at 74.

[27] Ibid., 89.

> It remains that something must be devised to be put in their place. For what they achieved in their day was to give the mysteries of faith that limited and analogous understanding that helped people find them meaningful. Today that help is not forthcoming. The bold pronounce the traditional formulations meaningless. The subtle discern in them an admixture of Christian doctrine with a Heideggerian forgetfulness of being. Nor is there any general consensus to expound and vindicate them, for the theological and philosophic basis for a consensus no longer seems to exist.[28]

Lonergan hoped to identify that basis by attending to the concrete performance of the subject. Understanding what Lonergan had to say about theological and philosophical foundations may help us answer some fundamental questions in eucharistic theology on the level of our time.

The Eucharist is at the center of the church's liturgical life. It is a profound mystery. But inquiring minds want to know. Is there anything we can know about this mystery? Does the eucharistic mystery, more than any other Christian mystery, simply require a sacrifice of the intellect to the demands of blind faith? If so, how does it mean what it means? Can we articulate a fruitful analogical understanding of this mystery that can illumine faith? Having learned from both Chauvet's critique of metaphysics and Lonergan's development of a critical metaphysics, we hope to offer a fruitful understanding of traditional eucharistic doctrines that is able to respond to some contemporary problems and shed some light on the great mystery that stands at the center of Christian worship.

[28] Lonergan, "Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response," 352–83, in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965–1980*, CWBL 17, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), at 365. Lonergan refers to this shift away from an earlier consensus as a shift in the understanding of culture from a classicist to an empirical notion of culture.

Chapter One

Louis-Marie Chauvet's Postmodern Sacramental Theology

Chauvet's work represents the most thoroughgoing criticism of metaphysical accounts of sacramental theology.[1] He embraces the challenge of thinking about the sacraments on the level of our time by undertaking a Heideggerian critique of onto-theology and elaborating a fundamental theology of sacramentality grounded in the symbolic. In a brief apology for his project Chauvet indicates why he takes a different tack: "If today we can think differently, it is not because we are more clever than they but because we have available to us tools of analysis and reflection which only the modern ethos at a certain stage of its evolution could supply."[2] The decision to take a new approach situated in the present cultural reality, Chauvet says, "unites us to Thomas Aquinas as much as it separates us from him."[3]

[1] See Glenn P. Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming Onto-Theology with Sacramental Tradition* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012). For a biographical sketch of Chauvet, see Philippe Bordeyne, "Louis-Marie Chauvet: A Short Biography," ix–xiv, in *Sacraments, Revelation of the Humanity of God: Engaging the Fundamental Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet*, ed. Philippe Bordeyne and Bruce Morrill (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008). In addition to *Symbol and Sacrament*, see Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Du Symbolique au Symbole: Essai sur les Sacrements* (Paris: Cerf, 1979); Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001).

[2] Chauvet, *Sacraments*, 95

[3] Ibid.

Chauvet's goals are limited, in accord with the theological method he adopts. His purpose is not to offer a definitive statement on the sacramental mediation of grace but to articulate one way to approach the sacraments other than that offered by scholastic methodology. In fact, he rejects the idea that a definitive statement is possible, preferring instead a variety of approaches. The question that concerns us here is whether he has adequately portrayed the older scholastic methodology, especially as it is found in Thomas Aquinas. And if not, what has he missed?

This is not to disqualify Chauvet from the start but to alert the reader to two key problems that emerge in the following account of the methodological program of *Symbol and Sacrament*: (1) Chauvet's misreading of Thomas's theory of knowing, and (2) the empiricist understanding of causality that both prejudices Chauvet's reading of Thomas on sacramental causality and influences his notion of the symbolic speech-act as "revealer/operator." Again, these problems do not disqualify Chauvet's massive contribution to contemporary sacramental theology, but they do call for clarifications and further development. My exploration of his work here is therefore undertaken with an eye to his critique of metaphysics and his methodology, because it is here that Chauvet's treatment raises fundamental questions about how best to understand church doctrines on the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

1. Symbol and Sacrament: Overcoming Onto-Theology

I begin by outlining Chauvet's presentation of what he calls the "onto-theological presuppositions of classical sacramental theology."[4] Under this heading he raises his central concerns with traditional eucharistic doctrines insofar as they are indebted to onto-theological foundations and formulated in terms of scholastic metaphysics. After examining his criticism of classical sacramental theology, I will move on to explore his appropriation of Heidegger in his attempt to "overcome" metaphysics. Chauvet's use of Heidegger leads to a discussion of mediation through language and the body, or the symbolic—the key to Chauvet's sacramental theology.

[4] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence* [= *SS*], trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 7.

1.1. Destruction as Therapeutic: Overwhelming Metaphysics with Difference[5]

At the center of Chauvet's critique of classical sacramental theology is what he calls the "ontotheological presuppositions" that inform traditional Catholic sacramental doctrines. Chauvet's concern is that these doctrinal formulations and the onto-theo-logic that supports them undermine the transformative power of the sacraments in the lives of Christians. Instead, he proposes a theology that "bases itself upon [the sacraments] as *symbolic figures allowing us entrance into, and empowerment to live out, the (arch-) sacramentality which is the very essence of Christian existence*."[6] Thus he proposes a sacramental reinterpretation of Christian existence, or a foundational theology of sacramentality.[7] Chauvet avers that his project is simply a matter of "trying to understand what we *already* believe, immersed as we are, through baptism and Eucharist, in *sacramentality*."[8]

In order to achieve his goal of a sacramental reinterpretation, Chauvet undertakes to free sacramental theology from the constraints of a metaphysics of cause and effect. He proposes a "radical overturn of the classical approach" that "ultimately strikes at the unexamined presuppositions of *metaphysics* and its always-already onto-theological profile."[9] Chauvet uses the first part of *Symbol and Sacrament* to criticize these "unexamined presuppositions" on the one hand, and on the other to develop the categories through which he will elaborate his theory of the symbolic in later chapters. He admits that the "*theological* reflection proposed here can stand only if we have first made explicit the *philosophical* position which undergirds it."[10] The philosophical work of the first part is therefore essential to the later constructive theological effort.

[5] See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 41–45: "we are to *destroy* the traditional content of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being—the ways which have guided us ever since" (p. 44). Heidegger goes on to indicate the "positive" goal of this program: to uncover the assumptions that lie at the base of our approach to the question of being. See Sean J. McGrath, *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2006), 210–28.

[6] *SS*, 2. Italics in the quoted material are all original except where indicated.

[7] Ibid., 1.

[8] Ibid., 2.

[9] Ibid. 2–3.

[10] Ibid., 3.

Chauvet takes the disparity between the real and thought about the real as foundational for a theology of the sacramental.[11] The mistaken assumption of the metaphysical tradition, according to this view, is that when we employ the verb "to be" we transcribe the real into language.[12] While he recognizes that the best thinkers in the vast sweep of history have always "taken a *step backwards*, a step of humble lucidity before the truth, a step which has protected them from falling into the deadly dogmatism of confusing their thought with the real," Chauvet wants to take the disparity between the real and thought about the real as his point of departure.[13] The refusal of Western philosophers and theologians to recognize this difference between the real and thought, or discourse about the real, shows a "lack of interest in exploring the bias of their unconscious assumptions [that] gives these thinkers a 'family resemblance' and allows us to speak of *the* 'metaphysics' or better still, *the* metaphysical."[14] Chauvet dwells on the difference, resisting any totalizing claims of knowing on being.

The primary category Chauvet criticizes in traditional sacramental theology is causality, which he describes as "always tied to the idea of production or augmentation."[15] According to Chauvet, causality "presupposes an explanatory model implying production . . . a model in which the idea of 'instrumentality' plays a pivotal role."[16] There seems to be a radical discontinuity, however, between grace and the "instrumental productionist language of causality."[17] Chauvet wonders why "the Scholastics chose this idea, apparently so inadequate and poorly suited to expressing the modality of the relation between God and humankind in the sacraments."[18] That causality is "poorly suited to express the modality of the relation between God and humankind in the sacraments" would seem to depend on what one means by causality.

While Chauvet admits that, of course, causality served only as an analogy and his subsequent criticism may be directed at a straw man, nevertheless he asserts that underlying the scholastic use of the language of causality

[11] Ibid., 8.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., 8–9.
[15] Ibid., 7.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

is "the never explicitly recognized or criticized assumptions that lay hidden at the foundation of the way they set up the problem."[19] Chauvet claims the scholastics were "*unable* to *think otherwise*" because of the "onto-theological presuppositions which structured their entire culture."[20] He believes the onto-theological foundations of scholastic theology constitute an "unconscious logic" that holds from the time of the Greeks down to the twentieth century. Despite the "many concrete, diverse, even opposed forms which the philosophical tradition inherited from the Greeks has taken over the twenty-five centuries of its existence" there remain, according to this view, "uncriticized assumptions lying at the base of all these systems" which can be discovered by studying their "family resemblances" or genealogy.[21] For Chauvet, as for Heidegger, these uncriticized assumptions make possible a total explanation of being.

What it would mean to explain the totality of being would depend on what one means by being. It is not true that all philosophers have meant the same thing by being, even though their formulations of being may have a family resemblance. Indeed, since philosophy develops, as do all areas of human knowing, later positions rely on the insights of earlier positions. But any genealogy of being would have to account for key differences as well as family resemblances if it were to do justice to particular theories of being. A full-blown genealogy is not Chauvet's project. He left that work to Heidegger, in whose thinking he finds resources for moving out of "foundational ways of thinking" that are characteristic of metaphysics.[22] But, perhaps with Heidegger, we should ask Chauvet, "What is metaphysics?"

The metaphysical is for Chauvet synonymous with "the onto-theological framework (that is, the always-already theological outline of metaphysics)."[23]

[19] Ibid., 7–8.

[20] Ibid., 8.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Debate over whether Heidegger's criticism applies to the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas is ongoing. See, for example, John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Thomas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982); Jean-Luc Marion, "Thomas Aquinas and Onto-Theology," 38–74, in *Mystics: Presence and Aporia,* ed. Michael Kessler and Christian Sheppard (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); S. J. McGrath, *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2006).

[23] *SS*, 9.

In his way of understanding metaphysics this means "a *methodological* concept . . . showing a *tendency* or an attracting pole characteristic of Western thought since the Greeks; this attraction is characterized as the 'foundational way of thinking' and therefore as the impossibility of taking as the point of departure for thought the very distance between discourse and reality."[24] In opposition to the so-called metaphysical method, Chauvet proposes a method that takes the gap between discourse and reality as its point of departure and operates within it. Chauvet proposes an alternative method that operates within the difference between thought and reality. This is the way of language, or the symbolic.[25] Chauvet claims for his method not merely the status of opposition to traditional metaphysics but rather "*another epistemological terrain* for our thinking activity."[26] The shift to another epistemological terrain will enable Chauvet to develop a fundamental theology of the sacramental based on a theory of the symbol rather than on a theory of being or metaphysics.

The methodological opposition between the symbolic and the metaphysical is for Chauvet a *heuristic* one. Therefore, because his concern in distinguishing between the symbolic and the metaphysical is primarily methodological, Chauvet's critique of metaphysics will target what he considers to be the unrecognized foundations or schemes of thinking it employs. Recognizing the potential for a circularity in this critique of metaphysics, he defends his revision of sacramental theology via symbolic methodology by emphasizing that the symbolic approach is never fully achieved, thus constituting a transition to be done again and again, which shows "how little we have to do here with the mere substitution of a new conceptual system for an old."[27] To escape the gravitational pull of foundational ways of thinking, one's method has to be always already self-critical, and it is never fully achieved because it stakes its claim on the terrain demarcated by the disparity between discourse and reality. The foil for Chauvet's elaboration of a symbolic method is the metaphysical method of Thomas Aquinas.

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

1.2. Thomas Aquinas and the Metaphysical

Chauvet singles out Thomas as the chief representative of the metaphysical, even while admitting from the outset that his presentation of Thomas may be a straw man.[28]

First, he points to the *place* of the sacraments within the *Summa Theologiae*. Although he highlights the fact that they are alluded to briefly in his discussion of the virtue of religion, Chauvet objects to Thomas's placement of the discussion of the sacraments in the *Tertia Pars*, after his theology of the passion. Chauvet understands that Thomas's note on the sacraments in the prologue of question 89 of *Secunda-Secundae* indicates that they could be taken up within the context of ethics, thus confirming his assertion that "the sacraments are considered to belong to ethics" as "the principal expression of our moral relation to God, a relation authentically Christian because it is brought into being by Christ, who directs the offering of a sanctified humanity toward God."[29] In a way Chauvet seems to inadvertently explain why Thomas places sacraments in the *Tertia Pars* since they belong to the situation of relationship with God mediated by the Christ event.

The virtues of religion are general categories that include acts of religion outside the Christian sacramental economy. Specifically Christian acts of religion are established by Christ and derive their power from his passion. Nevertheless, Chauvet is disappointed with the ramifications of this arrangement of the text: "One may regret that Thomas insufficiently emphasizes, in the treatise contained in the third part of the *Summa*, the ascendant and ethical aspects of the sacraments touched upon in the question relating to the 'exterior acts' of the virtue of religion."[30] Placing the treatise on the

[28] Ibid., 8.

[29] Ibid., 10. This is an odd reference to the *Summa Theologiae (ST)* because II–II, q. 89, deals with oath taking, or invoking the name of the Lord. Chauvet might have pointed to the preceding questions, particularly question 85, where Thomas connects sacrifice and ethics at q. 85, a. 3, ad. 2m: "Man's good is threefold. There is first his soul's good which is offered to God in a certain inward sacrifice by devotion, prayer and other like interior acts: and this is the principal sacrifice. The second is his body's good, which is, so to speak, offered to God in martyrdom, and abstinence or continency. The third is the good which consists of external things: and of these we offer a sacrifice to God, directly when we offer our possessions to God immediately, and indirectly when we share them with our neighbor for God's sake."

[30] Ibid., 11.

sacraments in the *Tertia Pars*, "stressing as it does the role of the sacraments in the sanctification of human beings, is too heavily weighted in favor of the 'Christological-descending' aspect."[31] Chauvet is concerned that this arrangement severs the real connection between sacrament and ethics.

Second, after questioning the placement of the sacraments in the *Summa*, Chauvet goes on to assess what he calls its "major innovations," especially the relationship between sign and cause in Thomas's thought. Chauvet traces three key shifts in Thomas's thought on the sacraments between the *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *Summa Theologiae*. First, there is a "transition from the priority of the *medicinal* function of the sacraments to the priority of the *sanctifying* function."[32] This shift influenced the way Thomas employed different kinds of causality in his theology of the sacraments. The *Commentary* emphasized the role of the sacraments as disposing the recipient to grace, but in the *Summa* Thomas subordinated even the medicinal function as a mode of efficient causality to the sacrament as the efficient cause of sanctification.[33]

The second shift involves Thomas's use of the categories "sign" and "cause." Chauvet says that ultimately Thomas chose Augustine's definition of a sacrament, "the sign of a sacred thing," but added a note on the causal function, viz., "*signum rei sacrae in quantum est sanctificans homines*."[34] The key addition, "insofar as it sanctifies human beings," reveals the causal dimension in Thomas's understanding of the sacraments. Sacraments are both signs and causes; they effect what they signify. This development in Thomas's thought grows out of a distinction between dispositive and instrumental causality. If the sacraments merely dispose one to receiving grace they are cases of "occasional causality." Thomas objected that dispositive or occasional causality would make the sacraments mere signs of a potential grace, but instead he holds that "it is the consistent teaching of the Fathers that the sacraments not only signify but also cause grace."[35] On Chauvet's interpretation, sign and cause are incompatible.[36]

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 12.

[34] Ibid., 15.

[35] Ibid., 16.

[36] Ibid., 17. "The 'sign' (*signum*), as it is presented by the celebrating Church, is the *very mediation* of the gift of grace. The whole problem consisted in *harmonizing two categories as completely foreign to one another as are 'sign' and 'cause.'"*

The question is whether a sacrament causes by signifying. Granted that sacraments do whatever they do by signifying, what could it possibly mean to say that something causes what it signifies? The answer is based on the analogy of instrumental rather than dispositive causality. Thomas's decision to discard the notion of dispositive causality in the *Summa Theologiae* reflects a shift away from Avicenna's notion of cause to Averroes's more Aristotelian distinction between principal and instrumental causality. According to Aristotle and Averroes the principle cause moves and the instrumental cause, being moved, moves.[37] Chauvet sums up the ramifications of this change: "With this one stroke, the sacraments no longer have to be considered as merely pseudo-efficient causes—only disposing—but rather as true causes in their own right, exercising their proper agency and leaving their mark on the final effect even if this action is always subordinated to the action of God, who remains the principal agent."[38] Because the principal cause of sanctification is God, any work of sanctification, including sacramental causality, is caused by the principle cause.

This subordination of all causation to the principal cause enables Thomas to suggest that sacraments can rightly be called causes of grace. Chauvet notes that the same schema is employed in Thomas's discussion of the incarnate Word in which the human nature of Christ operates as an instrument of divinity.[39] As the sacraments derive their power from the incarnate Word who instituted them, Thomas's sacramental theology follows from his Christology. In question 62 of the *Tertia Pars* he writes: "The principal efficient cause of grace is God, for whom the humanity of Christ is a conjoined instrument (like a hand), while the sacrament supplies an instrument that remains distinct (like a stick moved by the hand). It is thus necessary for the salvific power to pass from the divinity of Christ through his humanity and finally through the sacraments."[40] The proposition that the

[37] Ibid., 18.

[38] Ibid. This is a key insight for Thomas and represents an important change in his mature thinking. What Thomas recognizes in this change is the agency of God in the universe and the subjection of all other agency to the divine as secondary causes. This insight follows on the "theorem of the supernatural" which places God in a different entitative order and accomplishes what de-ontotheology desires but is unable to accomplish, i.e., thinking God outside of being.

[39] Ibid., 20.

[40] Ibid., here citing *ST* III, q. 62, a. 5.

sacraments derive their efficacy from the incarnate Word, in that they join the divine Logos to the finite human order—just as the incarnate Word was united with human nature—means that the sacraments are "*prolongations of the sanctified humanity of Christ.*"[41]

Having surveyed the development of Thomas's thought on the sacraments from the *Commentary on the Sentences* to the *Summa Theologiae*, and having summarized the relation of sign and causality in Thomas's thought, Chauvet turns to a critique of what he calls the "productionist" scheme of representation.[42] Returning to and elaborating on the foundational critiques with which he began his study, he wonders: "To explain the specificity of the sacraments in comparison with other means of mediating God's grace, one must say that they effect what they signify. But according to what modality?"[43] For Thomas the most fitting analogy is with instrumental causality. Therefore the sacraments can be said to "cause grace." Chauvet claims that Thomas's explanatory framework, employing terms like "cause," "work," "produce," "contain" (though Thomas repeatedly cautions that these terms function analogically), serves "to build up an ever-present *scheme* of representation that we call *technical or productionist*."[44] This kind of representation is the result of "unconscious (and uncriticized) onto-theological presuppositions" that Chauvet attempts to overcome with Heidegger's help.[45]

There are three aspects of Chauvet's critique of Thomas. First, the placement of the sacraments in the third part of the *Summa* is symptomatic of the persistent separation of sacrament and ethics, paired with a potentially unwarranted presumption of holiness on the part of the recipient because of a guaranteed sacramental effect. Chauvet's remedy incorporates the ethical moment into his theory of symbolic gift exchange, so that ethical conduct

[41] Ibid. Chauvet hints here that he will return to this notion of sacraments as "prolongations of the sanctified humanity of Christ" in the final section of *Symbol and Sacrament*. At this point it is worth alerting the reader to his concern there, i.e., that Thomas's sacramental theology is affected by the "Christo-monism" characteristic of the Western theological tradition (p. 463). We will return to the question of Trinitarian relations in sacramental theology below.

[42] Ibid., 21.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., 22.

[45] Ibid.

becomes the fulfillment of the gift of grace in the liturgy of the neighbor.[46] The second is related to the first, namely, Thomas's putative understanding of the sacraments as containers or quantities of grace that can be earned or hoarded. This image enables a rivalrous vision of sacramental grace, leading to potentially disastrous pastoral consequences. Third, the conception of sacraments as instruments tends to emphasize a priestly intermediary between God and the believer in the manner of ancient sacrificial cults. As the one who applies the instrument, the priest becomes the mediator of sacramental grace, especially in the context of sacrificial offering.[47] Chauvet thinks these ethical, pastoral, and clerical distortions are rooted in an onto-theo-logic that promotes the human tendency to be satisfied with apparently self-evident half-truths about the divine-human relation. A contemporary sacramental theology should help people face the symbolic labor of restructuring their relationships with God and others as a result of taking symbolic mediation seriously. In order to do that, contemporary sacramental theology will have to move definitively beyond scholastic metaphysical explanations of sacramental causality. Chauvet turns to Heidegger to begin constructing an alternative.

2. Reconfiguring Foundations: From the Logic of the Same to Symbolic Mediation

Chauvet summarizes Heidegger's argument about the forgetfulness of being characteristic of Western metaphysics as follows: "Being is thus presented as the general and universal 'something' or 'stuff' which conceals itself beneath entities, which 'lies at the base' of each of them (*hypokeimenon*), a permanent 'subsistent being,' *sub-stratum*, *sub-jectum*, and finally, as Descartes describes it, *sub-stantia*."[48] Because it confuses entity and being, "metaphysics believes itself to have produced an explanation of being, when

[46] See ibid., 265: "The element 'Sacrament' is thus the symbolic place of the on-going transition between Scripture and Ethics, from the letter to the body. The liturgy is the powerful pedagogy where we learn to consent to the presence of the absence of God, who obliges us to give him a body in the world, thereby giving the sacraments their plenitude in the 'liturgy of the neighbor' and giving the ritual memory of Jesus Christ its plenitude in our existential memory."

[47] See ibid., 259–60 and 308–9.

[48] Ibid., 26. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 123–34.

in fact it has only ontically reduced being to metaphysics' *representations*, utterly forgetting that nothing that exists 'is.' "[49] In attempting to find a "property common to the entirety of entities," metaphysics seeks a base, or foundation (*Grund*) in being and "from the moment it is conceived as at the base of all entities, being necessarily and simultaneously 'twins' into a unique *summit*— a *causa sui*."[50] Thus Chauvet writes: "Through its status as a preliminary onto-theological interpretation of the relation of being to entities, metaphysics, far from preceding theology, proceeds from it in a fundamental, and not an accidental, way."[51] That metaphysics proceeds from theology is not especially a problem for theologians like Thomas Aquinas who already operate in a horizon of faith in a creator God. It becomes a philosophical problem for Heidegger because he wants an account of the being of beings that does not lean on theology for foundations.

Even Thomas's insistence on analogical predication fails to satisfy Chauvet. So while metaphysics expresses an onto-theological interpretation of reality, it does so analogically, only because "analogy is . . . *congenital to metaphysics*."[52] Thomas's use of analogy simply reflects this congenital relationship, in which created realities participate in Being or the Good only in a deficient manner.[53] The ontological substrate, which is also the metaphysical within onto-theology, is the basis for attempts at total explanation of reality by means of universal and necessary causes beginning with a first cause. The god of metaphysics functions as a foundational cause blocking an infinite regress and thereby offering a totalizing account of being.[54] The metaphysical project manifests a desire to master being; it turns the truth into "an unfailingly available foundation, a substantial permanence, an objective presence."[55]

[49] *SS*, 27.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., 28.

[53] Thomas's use of analogical predication does not treat created realities as deficient. The point of analogy is to preserve divine transcendence. See Denys Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 179–83. See also Ralph McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996).

[54] *SS*, 28.

[55] Ibid.

For Chauvet this degradation of truth to causes, and at the limit to an ultimate cause, is simply a matter of self-assertion. It is "symptomatic of a visceral *anthropocentrism*: the need to begin with the certitude of the self, with the presence of the self to the self, by which everything else in the world is ultimately to be measured."[56] The gravamen of Chauvet's complaint is this:

> From the notion of being-as-substance as present permanence to the notion of the subject-substance as permanent presence, it is the same logic at work, a logic of the Same unfolding itself: a utilitarian logic which, because of fear of all difference, of what is by its nature permanently open, and finally of death, reduces being to its own rationality and, unknowingly, makes of it the glue that bonds a closed totality.[57]

This "logic of the Same" reduces the otherness of being to the rationality of the subject-substance who becomes the foundation of all being, which Chauvet, applying his understanding of Heidegger, proposes as the single logic of all metaphysical thinking—"that is why every metaphysics is, at its base and when building on this base, itself the Foundation that gives an account of the base, explains it, and finally asks it to explain itself."[58] The only way out of the logic of the same is by coming to terms with the place of language in human understanding.

2.1. Language and the Mediation of Being

After offering his interpretation of Heidegger's account of the logic of Western metaphysics, Chauvet argues that the metaphysical tradition promotes the dichotomy between being and language as a result of an inherently dualistic worldview extending back to Plato. A rupture was opened between the two by Plato's view that "the things of this world are now no more than shadows cast by the 'ideal' realities represented by thought and

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., 29. Chauvet is citing a French translation of Heidegger's *Identität und Differenz: "Daher ist alle Metaphysik im Grunde vom Grund aus das Gründen, das vom Grund die Rechenschaft gibt, ihm Rede steht und ihn schließlich zur Rede stellt"* (*Identität und Differenz* [Pfullinggen: Neske, 1957], 55). In English, see Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

objectified by language."[59] Language is no longer "the very place where the world happens," but a mere instrument used for objectifying thought.[60] Despite variations in the metaphysical traditions, Chauvet agrees with Heidegger that "one can discern a common way of representing being as '*something facing human beings which stands by itself*' in relation to humans' thinking and speaking."[61] Language has been reduced to a tool, an instrument for objectifying mental contents; it is conventional, arbitrary, ultimately a result of the fall and therefore not "natural" to the human being.[62]

Chauvet identifies this reduction of language to the status of an instrument in Thomas's theory of knowledge. As we will see, Chauvet's summary reveals a misreading that Lonergan spent much of his career seeking to correct.

> One could briefly summarize Thomas' theory as follows. (1) The object imprints its image (2a) in the senses by its sensible "impressed species" (*species impressa*)—the particularity of the thing—and (2b) in the mind through its intelligible impressed species—the universal aspect of the thing. Through the abstractive powers of the active intellect, the mind constructs (3) the concept, which is the mental representation of the thing, or the presence of the thing itself in the mind by way of its mental representation, and which is called the "interior word" (*verbum cordis* or *mentis*). The concept is then transmitted to the outside by (4) the exterior word in a discourse which is a judgment.[63]

Chauvet further simplifies his summary, arguing that for Thomas "there are only three truly distinct elements: the thing, the moment of intellectual activity (the formation of the concept) and the moment of judgment."[64] The key to Thomas's realism is that the object is naturally present in the mind through its mental representation. According to Chauvet, "Thomas' 'realism,' as is immediately evident, takes its point of departure from the conviction that the real is an object, an objective to *be reached*."[65] We will return to this

[59] *SS*, 29. For this interpretation of Heidegger, Chauvet relies on Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue avec Heidegger* (Paris: Minuit, 1973).

[60] *SS*, 29.

[61] Ibid., 30.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid., 32., citing *De Veritate*, q. 4, a. 1–2, and *De Potentia*, q. 8, a. 1.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

interpretation below, but I want to underline here how Chauvet interprets the relation between humans and being for Thomas as a confrontation between subject and object mediated by the "*instrumental intermediary*" of language.[66] In other words, Chauvet imposes the problem of bridging subject and object on Thomas, suggesting that the solution is the instrumentalization of language, as a consequence of which "language has ceased to be what it was at the dawn of pre-Socratic thinking; the *meeting place where* being and humankind mutually stepped forward toward one another."[67] Chauvet identifies that "meeting place" in the realm of symbolic mediation.

Before developing his symbolic approach, Chauvet examines the alternatives of analogical predication and negative theology. He readily admits that we cannot get by without analogy in theology, but, citing Serge Breton, he regards such analogy as "an inevitably mediocre compromise."[68] While it is clear that Chauvet rejects explanatory theologies that speak in terms of cause and effect, he likewise criticizes the negative theology that recurs throughout the theological tradition: "Negative theology, even in its most sublime moments where it transcends, through negation, the notion of being as cause, nonetheless remains viscerally connected to a type of language that is irremediably causal and ontological."[69] The only way through between positive and negative onto-theologies, Chauvet argues, is the mediation of language, which situated theology in the complex world of the subject. This is the critical issue for Chauvet. Subjects participate in saying, or unsaying, anything about God. The foundational issue is not God but the ones who talk about God.

By implicating the theologian in the language game, Chauvet hopes to illustrate that Christian theology is not reducible to concepts outside of the subjects engaged in the game. Chauvet has no interest in purifying concepts or replacing one theological concept with another. Theologians can grasp nothing "without at the same time recognizing themselves to be grasped by it."[70] Therefore, Christian theology's critical aspect should open a passage, continually undertaken, "from the attitude of a slave toward a master imagined as all powerful, clothed in the traditional panoply of the attributes

[66] Ibid., 32–33.
[67] Ibid., 33.
[68] Ibid., 40, citing Serge Breton, *Écriture et révélation* (Paris: Cerf, 1979), 160.
[69] *SS*, 42.
[70] Ibid., 43.

of *esse*, to the attitude of a child toward a God represented far differently because this God is seen always in the shadow of the cross, and thus to the attitude of a brother or sister toward others."[71]

The shift is twofold. As it regards the image of the subject, there is a turn away from imagining the self as a calculating subject discovering the universal and necessary and deploying the metaphysical language of causality to explain the relations between them, toward the self as always already speaking and being spoken, and so to letting oneself be spoken into being as Christian in the sacraments. As it regards the operative image of God, there is a shift away from a concept of God as *causa sui*, or being itself, or necessary being, or a master manipulating human slaves through causes, toward an image of a God in the shadow of the cross as loving self-giving.

Chauvet contrasts the metaphysical method of mastering concepts to his theory of the symbolic by evoking the *manna* of Exodus. The symbolic, according to Chauvet, reveals the order of grace more fully than the Thomist notion of causality because it is the order of "non-value . . . the way of the never-finished reversible exchange in which every subject comes to be."[72] For Chauvet grace is without limits and therefore not to be represented or defined in the manner of a value. Contrary to the Western tradition's emphasis on logic, Chauvet's appropriation of Heidegger opens up a space for play in thinking theologically out of "the ontic-ontological difference."[73] Only through difference is grace able to emerge in its fullness as a question, a non-value, that is, as a symbol. Hence he appeals to *manna* as a sheer gratuitousness that speaks the question "what is this?" or "man-hu?"[74] The symbolic explodes the "logic of the Same," which is based on an aggressive forcing of identity, because it is wholly other and wholly gift. Grace cannot be thought within the metaphysics of presence. Rather, grace is "of an entirely different order."[75]

2.2. Overcoming Onto-Theology?

Chauvet intends to overcome onto-theology by turning to the symbolic, with its openness and embrace of difference. But he wonders whether we

[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., 44.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 45.
[75] Ibid.

can simply decree the replacement of one method with another. He asks, "Are we able to think in any way other than the metaphysical?"[76]

He responds to these questions by outlining his proposal for overcoming metaphysics. Any attempt to reconfigure metaphysics cannot simply be an inversion of tradition, or merely a new set of terms that nonetheless remains within the tradition of Western metaphysical thinking, which would amount to pitching a new tent on the same ground. Rather, Chauvet envisions a complete "*change of terrain*—if it is true, as we will maintain, that the question here becomes inseparable from the *mode* of questioning, and the latter in its turn is constituted *by the questioning subject itself*: 'It is the way which sets everything on its way, and it sets everything on its way inasmuch as it is a speaking way.' "[77] Thus the questioning subject, as speaking and being spoken, is the terrain he selects as the starting point for the symbolic, not the subject in an abstract sense but as one already spoken into being by a particular historical context.

On this terrain metaphysics is an event in the history of Being. In the Heideggerian vein, Chauvet argues that the event (Heidegger's *Ereignis*) of metaphysics is the result of Being's revealing itself in this late stage in the history of Western philosophy as that which was forgotten and controlled by the calculating dominance of metaphysical thinking. Heidegger clarifies this destiny of Being: "The *Ge-stell* is in no way the result of human contrivance; on the contrary it is only the final stage of the history of metaphysics, that is, of the destiny of Being."[78] The retreat of Being in the face of technological

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., 47, citing Heidegger, *Acheminement vers la parole* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 183, 187, a French translation of *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (On the Way to Language); see Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1977, 1993), 393–426.

[78] *SS*, 48, citing Heidegger, *Le séminaire de Zähringen*, in *Questions* 4, trans. Jean Beaufret (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 326. Heidegger uses *Ge-stell* to refer to the technological "enframing" of the world that shapes our horizon. The world is "enframed" as a "standing reserve" available for deployment. And yet the reduction of the world in this way, at the same time that it represents an extreme danger for humanity, carries with it the possibility of a "saving power" insofar as it brings about the possibility of questioningly pondering technology understood without reference to truth. Such questioning is facilitated by art, which challenges technology's reduction of everything to the standing-reserve. See Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *Basic Writings*, 308–41, especially 325ff. See also Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good*

advance at the same time reveals itself as the forgotten question of modernity. Therefore, in order to overcome metaphysics one need not invent a new system; rather, the goal is to return to the forgotten origin of all metaphysical constructions, to Being itself.

a. Metaphysics as Event

For Heidegger, as for Chauvet, one cannot simply escape metaphysics. Overcoming metaphysics from this perspective means thinking the very thing classical metaphysics excludes, i.e., Being.[79] Any reflection on Being as event, however, is bound to confront metaphysics. Chauvet wants to insist that for the sake of a sacramental theology it is better not to prop up some new metaphysical system but, rather, to maintain the ontological difference neglected by the forgetfulness of Being. While the origins of metaphysics lie in the original play of *Dasein* and *Sein*, metaphysics eventually reduces Being to its own representations of Being. Being itself is forgotten. Only the representations remain, and "the dance of advance and retreat which being carries out, its movement of presence in absence, has been reduced to the presence of an available foundation."[80] The key to overcoming metaphysics is to undertake a return to the original playfulness. For Chauvet, overcoming metaphysics is therefore a matter of conversion: "This is a test of conversion: Can we consent to leave the solid, reassuring ground of our represented foundation and the stable, fixed point in order [to] let ourselves go toward this demanding *letting-be* in which we find ourselves out of our depth?"[81]

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and Evil (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 399: "The *Gestell* is something man-made, but we have lost our freedom with regard to it. The *Gestell* has become our 'destiny.' What is so dangerous about this is that life in the *Gestell* threatens to become one-dimensional, lacking alternatives, and that the memory of a different kind of world encounter and world sojourn is expunged."

[79] *SS*, 50.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., 51. In his critical assessment of *Symbol and Sacrament*, Vincent Miller seizes on Chauvet's use of *Gelassenheit* (translated here as "letting-be"): "For Eckhart, *Gelassenheit* functions between a human soul and a loving God. Thus, an uncritical letting-be is a quite appropriate posture for the human to take. With Heidegger and Chauvet, however, the context includes the added dimension of the human symbol world. In order for *Gelassenheit* to function here, one would have to assume that the symbolic mediation in human culture is as unsullied as God's mystical presence in the soul. This is clearly not the case." See Vincent J. Miller, "An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation: Louis-Marie

Chauvet's appropriation of Heidegger and his critique of the metaphysical tradition culminates in this demand for conversion, or "letting-be" in theology that leads away from the firm foundations of scholastic metaphysics and into the mystery of Being. However, Chauvet recognizes the indebtedness to metaphysics such a critique must have. Again he quotes Heidegger: "The essence of metaphysics is something other than metaphysics itself. A thinking which pursues the truth about Being does not rest content with metaphysics; still, it does not *oppose* metaphysics."[82] Chauvet recognizes that the root of metaphysics, the foundation, is not something out there to be discovered, some particular concept or privileged view. Instead, with Heidegger, he proposes that the essence of metaphysics is everywhere and lies within us.[83] Therefore living authentically with metaphysics is not a matter of questing for universal and necessary causes; rather, it is to participate in the event that is Being by "letting-be" in the playfulness of being.

In light of the event of Being, the history of philosophy reveals that Being is not only concealed by a particular tradition's forgetfulness of Being, but also that Being's withdrawal is characteristic of its essence. The essence of Being is discovered as absence. The very forgetfulness of Being reveals something about being to those who wish to reflect on it, i.e., that any attempt to think about being will ensure Being's retreat and concealment. Thinking means thinking about the forgetfulness of Being. Therefore, "there is no other method for thinkers to overcome this forgetfulness than to 'settle themselves and stand within it.'"[84] Chauvet concludes that metaphysics is really the business of thinking itself.

Chauvet's Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality," *Horizons* 24, no. 2 (September 1, 1997): 230–47, at 240. Miller suggests a more critically grounded understanding of the symbol can be found in the works of Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas. While Miller focuses his criticisms on Chauvet's use of *Gelassenheit* in regard to the sacraments, his use of the term as a fundamental posture for thought is also inadequate. There is a critical apparatus in human thinking that goes beyond the passivity of letting-be, from thinking to knowing, which we will explore in depth with Lonergan's help. On the other hand, Chauvet is right to call our attention to the need for openness as the primary posture toward the real, especially as a way of overcoming conceptual systems that attempt to fit experience into preexisting concepts and categories.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., 52.

b. Difference and Questioning: A Philosophical Method

In describing metaphysics as the very business of thought, Chauvet enacts a philosophical method by which one can never go beyond metaphysics or "overcome" metaphysics; indeed, one need not "oppose" metaphysics at all. What the philosopher must do in this case is question all metaphysical systems, undertake a return to that original difference, the infinity that has been masked by the putative certainty of metaphysics. A hermeneutical philosophy implicates the subject in the metaphysical tradition. The constant interplay between questioning and answering and questioning again highlights the difference between thinking and being, between presence and absence. The "rediscovery" of the difference revealed by the play of presence and absence, of the event that uncovers and the arrival that covers, enables a critical hermeneutics and philosophy.[85]

Hermeneutical philosophy requires conversion. Because we are unable to "jump outside" the metaphysical tradition, the tradition in which we live, we must instead learn to reverse the direction of our questioning, informed as it is by our traditions, and allow ourselves to be questioned by Being. Since the hermeneutic turn executed by Heidegger, the self-critical element is at the center of philosophy. Chauvet describes self-criticism, or the critique of one's tradition, simply as "learning to 'let go.'"[86] However, the ease with which this might ultimately be accomplished does not detract from the fact that it is also "the most difficult because it requires us to unmask the false evidence on which rests the eidetic representations of being, the first of which is the almost ineradicable habit of representing Being as 'something facing humans which stands by itself.'"[87] Philosophy consists in uncovering the forgotten presuppositions of metaphysics.[88]

However, the only way to unmask the presuppositions of metaphysics, without at the same time repeating the mistakes of metaphysics by cobbling together an alternative foundation, is to let go of the possibility of ever arriving at an ultimate foundation.[89] The only possibility remaining for philosophers, according to Chauvet is to "orient themselves in a new

[85] Ibid., 51–52.
[86] Ibid., 53.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.

direction . . . starting from the uncomfortable *non-place* of a permanent questioning, which both corresponds to and guarantees being."[90] Permanent questioning entails "an unachievable task, a task whose very essence is its incompleteness."[91] Chauvet captures an important insight from contemporary philosophy that has significant ramifications for theology: all knowing is conditional precisely because finite subjects are always implicated in the process. Human beings do not exist vis-à-vis being as an object but are always already implicated in being. Any metaphysics grounded in an epistemology of knowledge by confrontation is overcome in this hermeneutical approach. Whether metaphysics itself is thereby overcome is a further question.

c. Beyond Language as Instrument: Speaking Being

One of the key consequences of Chauvet's reconfiguration of being outside of a subject-object relationship is that it acknowledges the role of language as more than a mere instrument. Instead, "language is 'the house of being, in which humans live and thereby ex-sist.'"[92] Echoing Heidegger, Chauvet sees the instrumentalization of language as a key reversal in the history of philosophy that has led humans to think of themselves as the masters of language. Consequently, humans attempt to control the world around them through language understood as a means not only of communication but also of coercion: "It is by one movement that humans, putting themselves at the center of the universe, imagine they dominate the world because they are the point of reference and see themselves as the masters of language: the explicative reduction of the world and the instrumental reduction of language go hand in hand."[93] If this is the case, everything needs rethinking. We need to rediscover language as "the house of Being in which man ex-sists by dwelling, in that he belongs to the truth of Being, guarding it."[94]

Rediscovering language as the horizon within which human beings live leads to a new understanding of the role of language in the communication

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., 55. See Heidegger, *Lettre sur l'humanisme, Questions* 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 106. English translation in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 213–66, at 237.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," *Basic Writings*, 237.

of meaning: "Language is neither primarily nor fundamentally a convenient tool of information nor is it a distributor of carefully regulated titles. . . . It is summons—*vocation*."[95] This evocative character of language is discovered primarily in poetry. The poem is a summons into being. Chauvet asks: "Which of the two presences is the higher, the more real: that which spreads itself out before our eyes, or that which is summoned?"[96] Language makes our human world.

While Chauvet recognizes that language has an instrumental "pole," he emphasizes that the instrumental aspect of language is joined to a more fundamental pole, belonging to a different level of being. He argues: "At this ontological level, language is of an order completely different from that of the useful instrument that rhetoric exploited so well as a means of manipulation and power."[97] This level of language constitutes the horizon of being in which humans move. Human beings do not deploy language as a tool; rather, we are already spoken into being by language and never prior to language. Poetry reveals the ontological fullness of language because poetry creates a world and calls to humans, asking them to become poets who allow themselves to be spoken by language, by first becoming listeners: "Thus is brought about, within language itself, the coming-to-presence of what is summoned."[98]

d. Presence as Absence, Presence as Trace

Chauvet contrasts this coming-to-presence with what he calls the "simple factuality of 'what lies before our eyes.'"[99] Rather than a "frozen metaphysical presence of a subsisting entity," *coming-to-presence* is a presence "whose very essence is the 'coming,' the advent, and which is *thus essentially marked by the stroke of absence*."[100] Here, Chauvet returns to the center of his critique of onto-theology, i.e., that the permanent presence of being in traditional metaphysics erases the trace of difference that reveals the basic absence at the heart of the real. Chauvet recognizes that presence is always marked by absence, is always "presence-as-trace; trace of a passing always-already

[95] *SS*, 56.
[96] Ibid. See Heidegger, *Acheminement vers le parole*, 22–23.
[97] *SS*, 56.
[98] Ibid., 58.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

past; trace thus of something absent. But still trace, that is, the sign of a happening which calls us to be attentive to something new still to come."[101] The notion of "presence-as-trace" calls us to attend to the absence that is forgotten by traditional metaphysics. The poet resists this closure by constantly engaging the trace and the absence of transparent meaning "in a gracious attitude of letting be the gratuitousness of being and of letting oneself be spoken by it."[102]

2.3. Theology as Hermeneutical

Chauvet's challenge to theologians in light of Heidegger's hermeneutical philosophy is to *become* theologians by enacting theology, for "theologians are not outside their work; rather, they make spectacles of themselves, they ex-pose themselves, they take risks, since they are required by their profession not to demonstrate anything by a calculating knowledge but to *give witness to that in which they know themselves to be already held*."[103] Therefore theology cannot be "reduced to a science that seeks to explain everything" or be used to justify the world by responding to the question "why?"

Chauvet employs Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics as a method for thinking theologically. A hermeneutical theology, emerging out of a confrontation of worlds in the reading of texts, poses its questions about God in history. Such a theology does not have recourse to blank metaphysical concepts like "nature" or "person." Rather, the question "who is God?" becomes concrete, "takes flesh for us not by descending from the theologies of the hypostatic union but rather by rising from the languages of the New Testament witnesses, which are historically and culturally situated."[104] Chauvet recalls Heidegger's reading of the Pauline declaration in 1 Corinthians 1:23 that the cross is folly to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews to indicate the direction of a hermeneutical theology that goes beyond the wisdom of the world for its methods. The shift to a Greek conceptuality is, for Chauvet, an inevitable compromise and an attempt to reclothe the denuded and crucified God of the passion. He cautions that "if theology cannot express the message of

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid., 60.

[103] Ibid., 65. There are resonances between Chauvet's claims here and Lonergan's functional specialty "Foundations," as we will see in chap. 4 below.

[104] Ibid., 69.

the cross, it must nevertheless begin its thinking with that message," which "disenthralls it from itself."[105] This involves a "permanent work of *mourning*" for the theologian who consents to the "presence of the absence" of God in the shadow of the cross.[106]

Consent to the presence of the absence of God involves theologians from the start in the symbolic sphere rather than in the realm of clear and distinct ideas. Thus Chauvet discerns a homology between his theological method and the therapeutic philosophy of Heidegger: "The path of theological thought on a crucified God keeps us in an attitude of 'folly' that is homologous to the path of philosophical thought on Being, although there is no passage from one to the other."[107] He expounds on his meaning, noting "It is a 'folly' because we must accept the death of the illusion *everything in us desperately wants to believe, that is, the illusion that we can somehow pull ourselves out of the necessary mediation of symbols*."[108] The desire to escape symbolic mediation is manifest in our frequent recourse to talk about the real as something that is self-evident.[109]

2.4. Summary of Chauvet's Method

Chauvet's critique of the onto-theological presuppositions of scholastic metaphysics touches on three key problems confronting any contemporary theology of the sacraments: first, the inadequacy of causality to express the symbolic mediation of the divine-human encounter in the sacraments; second, the always-already mediated character of human knowing and therefore the centrality of language as "world" rather than instrument; third, the inadequacy of thinking of the divine as permanent presence rather than the self-effacing God of the cross. The net result of confronting these questions is a methodological orientation that thinks theologically out of the difference preserved by a conversion to the presence of the absence of God. Following this articulation of his methodological orientation, Chauvet uses the remainder of his treatise to reflect on the sacraments, primarily the eucharistic liturgy, where he puts his method into practice.

[105] Ibid., 73.
[106] Ibid., 74.
[107] Ibid., 82.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.

3. A Test: Chauvet's Eucharistic Theology

Before we access Chauvet's methodology, it will help to understand how he applies it in articulating a theology of the Eucharist. First, Chauvet considers the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist as "anti-sacrifice." Second, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is conceived not as substance, but as "ad-esse."

3.1. The Anti-sacrificial Character of Christian Liturgical Sacrifice[110]

While he rejects the classical understanding of eucharistic sacrifice, Chauvet recognizes that he is constrained by the language of the Eucharistic Prayer, which he attempts to reinterpret in terms of his theory of symbolic exchange. First, he employs the metaphor of the "Easter tear," because the rending of the temple curtain in the Synoptic accounts of the death of Christ has significant consequences in relation to cultic action.[111] Thus "the Holy of Holies is thereafter empty; the temple of the presence of God is now the body of the Risen One (John) or the community of the faithful (Paul)."[112] Second, Chauvet applies both Pauline theology and the theology of the priesthood in the letter to the Hebrews to expand his claim: "It is thus the entire Jewish system which through its symbol, the Temple, is rendered obsolete as a means of access to God: the Holy of Holies is empty. Christians have no other Temple than the glorified body of Jesus, no other altar than his cross, no other priest and sacrifice than his very person: *Christ is their only possible liturgy.*"[113] This establishes the Christian cult on a very new and different terrain.

A major consequence of Chauvet's reading is a move away from propitiatory or expiatory sacrifice to symbolic exchange. The former modes of offering belong to a cult in which sacrifice mediates the divine presence through the activity of the priestly caste. Christians, according to Pauline theology, no longer require the mediation of the divine presence "through the performance of good works, ritual or moral, or through the intermediary of

[110] Chauvet employs the notion of "anti-sacrifice" as a third term that extricates him from the polarity of "either sacrifice or non-sacrifice" in thinking about the eucharistic liturgy. He criticizes the thesis of René Girard for heading too far in the direction of the latter.

[111] *SS*, 248.

[112] Ibid., 248–49.

[113] Ibid., 250.

a priestly caste," because "Jesus has finally sealed, in his Pasch, especially in its culmination, the gift of the Spirit."[114] Salvation as gift "radically subverts the existing system: it attacks it decisively at its very root."[115] What, then, is Christian sacrifice?

Chauvet focuses his attention on the thanksgiving offering, *todah*, or offering of the first fruits in Deuteronomy 26 as the appropriate model for understanding Christian sacrifice as in some way "anti-sacrificial." Yet he is not unaware of a danger in attempting to move away too quickly from the notion of sacrifice that for centuries has shaped Christian liturgical practices, especially in the West. He notes that in criticizing the notion of liturgical sacrifice that was accepted up to the Second Vatican Council "we must be on our guard against judging it according to a more recent cultural sensibility . . . and against too hastily denigrating what we have only recently—and perhaps equally uncritically—eulogized."[116] And so Chauvet asks us to understand Christ's work as indeed a sacrifice, but in terms of an existential rather than a ritual modality. This enables him to interpret the sacrifice of Christ as *kenosis*, thus bringing a central sacrificial idea to bear, but not on the terrain of ritual sacrifice. The language of sacrifice retained in the eucharistic prayer takes on new meaning in light of this interpretation.

The *kenosis* of Christ is understood as "the *consent to his condition as Son-in-humanity and as Brother of humanity.*"[117] The Son's kenotic self-giving is a reversal of Adam's sin, which Chauvet interprets according to a master-slave dialectic, in which humankind lives "its relation with God according to a pattern of force and competition, a pattern whose typical representation is the *slave* trying to seize for him or herself the omnipotence of the *master* and to take the master's place."[118] Christ "consents to taste humanity to its extreme limit, death experienced in the silence of a God who would not even intervene to spare the Just One this death"[119] The Son's

[114] Ibid., 252. Chauvet's caricature of the temple cult may not be adequate to the Jewish understanding of law and covenant. The prophets, after all, remained Jews.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid., 291.

[117] Ibid., 301.

[118] Ibid., 299. Chauvet uses Hegel's master-slave dialectic as elaborated by Jean Hyppolite. See *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's* Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. Samuel Cherniak (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1979).

[119] *SS*, 301.

consent is the exemplar of "letting-be" of "de-mastery," a self-sacrifice of his divine authority in filial trust in the Father.

Chauvet develops the notion of filial trust in order to clarify the place of the expiatory dimension within an anti-sacrificial understanding of eucharistic sacrifice, arguing that "it would be wrong to imagine that the Christian 'anti-sacrificial' viewpoint could assume the sacrifice of communion to the exclusion of the sacrifice of redemption."[120] The line of anti-sacrificial demarcation is not meant to separate expiation and communion but to distinguish "a servile attitude and a filial attitude with regard to the entire sacrificial order."[121] This allows Chauvet to accept the sacrificial language of the liturgy while transposing it into a new modality.[122] The transition from the servile attitude, which is indicative of thinking of the divine-human relation in terms of the master-slave dialectic, to the filial attitude allows us to understand sacrifice as a pedagogy for learning "to acknowledge ourselves as *from others and for others* by recognizing ourselves to be *from God and for God*."[123] The filial identity of the church as a community of sisters and brothers of Christ, daughters and sons of the Father, makes of it a "eucharistic people" whose task is to give flesh here and now to the crucified God by exercising true freedom in loving God and neighbor, which is the "true sacrifice" of the Eucharist as "anti-sacrifice."[124]

3.2. The Eucharistic Presence as Ad-esse

In his interpretation of eucharistic presence Chauvet argues that transubstantiation is "not an absolute and thus it is theoretically possible to express the specificity of Christ's presence in the Eucharist in a different manner."[125]

[120] Ibid., 310.

[121] Ibid., 311.

[122] Chauvet notes that the necessary demythologization of sacrifice "cannot be carried to a complete jettisoning of the myth without foundering, like Bultmann, on the new myth of a faith without a mythic residue" (*SS*, 302). This requires regarding as legitimate the "ineradicable" language of sacrifice in Christian liturgy, but taking care lest it slide into a servile connotation.

[123] Ibid., 314.

[124] Ibid., 315.

[125] Ibid., 383; see also 382–89. Whether Chauvet is correct in his assessment of the dogmatic use of the term as one, if the most fitting (*aptissime*), among other ways of conceiving the eucharistic transformation is a matter of dispute. Herbert McCabe agrees with

Chauvet focuses his interpretation of Thomas's theology of transubstantiation on the problem of an ultra-realism raised by magisterial opposition to Berengar's symbolic approach to the sacrament. Because Thomas understands substance in relation to intellect and not the senses, according to Chauvet, his treatment of the eucharistic change avoids gross physicalism. But Chauvet's problem with Thomas's understanding of transubstantiation is what he sees as a failure to account for the human destination of the consecrated gifts. This failure has two results: "First [the Eucharist] 'contains' Christ himself 'absolutely,' whereas the other sacraments have efficacy only *in ordine ad aliud*, that is, relative to their application to the subject. From this comes the second difference: its first effect (*res et sacramentum*) is *in ipsa materia* ('in the matter itself'), whereas in baptism the effect is *in suscipiente* ('in the one who receives it')."[126] Chauvet finds this mode of explanation "dangerous," and instead offers an understanding of eucharistic presence that takes the destination of the gifts as "constitutive" of its mode of being as *ad-esse*.[127]

First, the presence of Christ is located in the entirety of the eucharistic celebration, so that the eucharistic presence is a "*crystallization*" of Christ's presence in the congregation and the Scriptures. This allows the manifold "presences" of Christ in the liturgy to inform our understanding of the Eucharist.[128] The one who "comes to presence" in the Eucharist is "already present" in the body of the church and the body of the Scriptures, so that from "beginning to end the architectural dynamic of the vast *sacramentum* which the whole of the celebration forms forces one to realize the relational '*for*' belongs to the very concept of the eucharistic 'presence.'"[129]

Chauvet's interpretation in *God Still Matters*, ed. Brian Davies (New York: Continuum, 2002), 115. Stephen Brock argues to the contrary that transubstantiation alone expresses the whole conversion; see his "St. Thomas and Eucharistic Conversion," *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 734–46. Both Matthew Levering and Reinhard Hütter have echoed Brock on this point. See Levering, *Sacrifice and Community*, 117ff.; and Hütter, "Transubstantiation Revisited: *Sacra Doctrina*, Dogma, and Metaphysics," 21–79, in *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life; Essays in Honor of Romanus Cessario, O.P.*, ed. Reinhard Hütter and Matthew Levering (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2010).

[126] *SS*, 387–88. See *ST* III, q. 73, a. 1, ad. 3.

[127] *SS*, 389.

[128] Both *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Mysterium Fidei* refer to the multiple presences of Christ in the liturgy.

[129] *SS*, 391.

Second, in addition to the multiple presences of Christ that "appear" in the liturgy and constitute already the eucharistic presence as a "for," Chauvet directs our attention to the whole of the Eucharistic Prayer, which presents the memorial and eschatological aspects of Christ's eucharistic presence. Here, he finds an indication of the absence at the heart of what is too easily taken to be an already accomplished, full presence in the Eucharist. There is a distance between the cross of Golgotha and the parousia. The eschatological distance "crosses out its very truth of presence with the stroke of absence and prohibits us from conceiving it as a 'full' presence in the Gnostic manner."[130]

Third, Chauvet exegetes the "for" in the institution narrative as revealing the presence as an *ad-esse*. The acts of taking, eating, and drinking are constitutive of the salvation offered by Christ (John 6:53-57). It is the eating that brings the presence to its fulfillment as "being for."

Fourth, Chauvet explores the biblical symbolism of bread and wine as food, not simply food in the sense of sustenance but as gifts of the earth and revealers of our radical dependence on daily gifts, and at the same time as bringers of joy and feasting. He points out that the scholastics did not take into account the richness of the biblical imagery surrounding bread and wine, because they only treat them as the ontological substrate for the emergence of the body and blood of Christ.[131] Chauvet wants to emphasize that the very being of bread makes it suitable for incorporation into the human body. As the "work of human hands," bread is not reducible to its chemical compounds but is already a social reality. As a socially constituted reality bread is a symbol of sharing. Bread offered to God is the highest recognition of God as God, as the one who gives the gift of bread and indeed of all life. Chauvet proposes: "Bread is never so much bread as in the gesture of thankful oblation where it gathers within itself heaven and earth, believers who 'hold fellowship' in sharing it, and the giver whom they

[130] Ibid.

[131] A particularly striking example of this kind of thinking can be seen in Thomas's argument that bread and wine are not in fact artifacts but natural realities. See Christopher M. Brown, "Artifacts, Substances, and Transubstantiation: Solving a Puzzle for Aquinas' Views," *The Thomist* 71 (2007): 89–112. This is critical for Thomas because artifacts do have substance and therefore cannot undergo transubstantiation.

acknowledge to be God: in this way a new communion of life is established between themselves and God."[132] All bread is already symbolic.[133]

The traditional claim that the bread is no longer bread after the consecration is based on a metaphysical notion of substance. Chauvet argues instead that authentically to proclaim the bread as the body of Christ "requires that one emphasize all the more [that] it is indeed still bread, but now essential bread, bread which is never so much bread as in this mystery."[134] He interprets John 6 according to this symbolic understanding of the eucharistic bread as "true bread": "the *artos alethinos* where the truth of bread, always forgotten (*a-letheia*), is revealed."[135] Because this bread is a word, it nourishes human beings in their humanity as language-bodies. As bread "par excellence," this bread is the bread of life. Consequently, Chauvet understands the phrase "truly, really and substantially" employed by the Council of Trent "in an *altogether different way* from that of classic onto-theology."[136]

In light of his concern to integrate the subject into the very being of the bread as *ad-esse*, Chauvet defends his position against those who would criticize it as subjectivist.[137] In the symbolic order presence is always experienced as absence, thereby preserving the real from any subjectivist reduction. The sacraments resist such a reduction on account of their concrete exteriority; no sacrament does so more than the eucharistic body that, because of its exteriority and anteriority, resists our desire to dominate the real with the "logic of the Same." Indeed, the Eucharist conceals at the same time as it discloses. And this is crucial to Chauvet's understanding: the presence of Christ is always an absence. Christ's eucharistic presence must be "marked by an absence for the 'icon' of the Eucharist . . . to preserve through its

[132] *SS*, 398.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid., 400.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid.

[137] From the context it is probable that Chauvet is responding to issues raised by Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), which was published some years earlier in the French original, *Dieu Sans Être* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), particularly since Chauvet employs the categories of "idol" and "icon" in subsequent pages in the same way they are employed by Marion, and depends on the same work by Christoph Schönborn (*L'icône du Christ. Fondements théologiques élaborés entre le Ier et le Iie Conciles de Nicée [325–787]* [Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1976]) from which Marion draws his categories (p. 403).

own material consistency and spatial exteriority, against which the faith stumbles, Christ's absolute 'difference.'"[138] The ritual breaking of the bread is *the* mark of absence.[139]

The mark of absence in the Eucharist does not make an encounter with the crucified Lord unavailable; instead, it invites an *existential* sharing in the body of the Lord rather than a reduction of it to a present object. The absence, constitutive of a presence inasmuch as it is not conceived according to the permanent presence of metaphysics but is experienced as coming-into-presence, also reveals the absence with which every presence is negated.[140] Thus the Eucharist is the "*paradigmatic figure of this presence-of-the-absence of God*."[141] It invites us into the symbolic labor of becoming believers. The mode of that absence in broken bread opposes the image of the risen Christ as a closed or contained reality who is a permanent presence. The breaking of the bread manifests the ultimate reality of bread as a "being for" that unites the church in a communion between members and with Christ as brothers and sisters in sharing eucharistic communion. But this communion is not self-worship; rather, those joined in communion are joined in being open to the concrete historical mediations of the symbolic Other, in relation to others—especially "those others whom people have reduced to less than nothing through an economic system which crushes the poorest and a cultural system which makes them scapegoats."[142] Chauvet's emphasis on ethics in the culmination of his treatment of the Eucharist highlights his concern throughout *Symbol and Sacrament* to break open Christian sacramental practice. Far from being a closed grace delivery system, the sacraments are invocations of a new way of being in the world. The ethical is the site of the verification of sacramental grace, such that any thinking of sacramental causality in an onto-theological mode is put to the test in the historical life of the believer. There is still causality here, as we will discuss

[138] *SS*, 403–4.

[139] See Louis-Marie Chauvet, "The Broken Bread as Theological Figure of Eucharistic Presence," 236–64, in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, ed. Lieven Boeve and Lambert Leijssen (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

[140] *SS*, 404.

[141] Ibid., 405.

[142] Ibid., 407.

presently, but it is conceived according to Chauvet's understanding of the sacrament as "revealer" and "operator" of grace in history.[143]

4. Assessing Chauvet's Method

While Chauvet's criticisms of metaphysics and his subsequent elaboration of a theory of the symbol raise important questions for future sacramental theology, he has overlooked some critical matters in his elaboration of theological method. Fundamentally, he commits what we might call an oversight of insight. Why is this important? Chauvet's failure to attend to the role of insight and understanding in human thinking and knowing undermines his constructive project. His attempt to wrest the sacraments from a metaphysical scheme of cause and effect otherwise remains captive to the logic of causality, if not the language, because of a failure to deal adequately with the acts of understanding underlying Thomas's theory of causality. Allow me to explain.

At the conclusion of *Symbol and Sacrament*, Chauvet describes the sacraments as "operators" and "events" of grace. Raymond Moloney asks in his review of the work: "Is this not efficient causality under another name?"[144] Moloney also highlights Chauvet's reference to the efficacy of the symbol in the context of his discussion of the performative dimension of language acts in the theory of J. L. Austin.[145] Indeed, Chauvet is aware that his project will simply reinscribe causality in the sacraments if he does not successfully get beyond classical onto-theology. Sacraments can only be described as "operators" in a symbolic view of the world. Because the symbolic "transcends the dualistic scheme of nature and grace,"[146] it conceives the relation between God and humankind as openness to the other. Sacraments are "operators" and "revealers" of this relationship where both divine and human are rendered open to each other. As a "being for," the Eucharist is the self-offering of the humanity of God that reveals the self-emptying God of the cross.

[143] The terms "revealer" and "operator" emerge in the context of a discussion of the sacraments as "effective symbolic expressions" (pp. 425–45).

[144] Raymond Moloney, review, "*Symbol and Sacrament*," *Milltown Studies* 38 (Autumn 1996): 148.

[145] See *SS*, 130.

[146] Ibid., 544. Chauvet's claim that his position transcends dualistic thinking is complicated by his depiction of the mode of being open as an encounter between human and divine persons in an opposed relation, even if an open one.

Chauvet therefore concludes his treatise by revealing the pastoral purpose of his vast undertaking. He writes:

> Our *fundamental difficulty* lies, not in the affirmation of "sacramental grace" as such, but in what this presupposes, specifically, the humanity of the divine God revealed in the scandal of the cross, a scandal which is irreducible to any justifying "reason" and continues to work upon us when we dare to "envisage" the disfigured ones of this world as the image of our crucified Lord and thereby to transfigure our tragic history into a salvific history.[147]

While I quite agree with Chauvet's identification of the disfigured ones of this world with the image of the crucified Lord, I am not as clear how the cross effects a transformation of the tragic history of humanity into a salvific history without communicating some meaning that can be shared and borne into history by the church. Further, how does the Eucharist participate in that transformed history, if not as a kind of cause? If Chauvet has admitted that his fundamental difficulty is not with sacramental grace as such, can we fruitfully understand sacramental grace in terms other than instrumental causality? To conclude the present chapter let me briefly respond to Chauvet's reading of sacramental causality and his interpretation of the cross before undertaking a more systematic inquiry into these problems in eucharistic theology with Lonergan.

4.1. Causality in Thomas Aquinas

Bernard Blankenhorn's trenchant analysis of *Symbol and Sacrament* seizes on Chauvet's misinterpretation of Thomistic causality under the genus of "production/ augmentation."[148] Although Chauvet explored the transition in Thomas from dispositive causality in the *Commentary on the Sentences* to efficient instrumental causality in the *Summa Theologiae*, he missed the meaning of this shift. Chauvet understood that Thomas's change to an Aristotelian-Averroist model of efficient causality is meant to avoid reducing the sacrament to a sign of some future grace, as one would have in dispositive causality. Thomas recognized that the fathers consistently

[147] Ibid., 538.

[148] Bernard Blankenhorn, "Instrumental Causality in the Sacraments," Nova et Vetera 4, no. 2 (2006): 255–94. See p. 10.

taught that the sacraments are not only signs but also causes of grace.[149] Blankenhorn clarifies that the shift in question is not a result of preferring one theoretical model over another. Indeed, Blankenhorn shows that both disposing and perfecting causality occur in Avicenna. Thomas's change of mind was motivated by the church fathers, who used the language of efficient causality. Furthermore, Thomas is not simply baptizing philosophical language by employing a notion like causality. Instead, Thomas's thought on instrumental causality "*begins* with a fairly strict Aristotelian approach and proceeds to an original philosophy."[150]

Blankenhorn pinpoints the shift in Thomas at a clarification of sacramental grace in the *De Veritate*, where Thomas explains that grace is not a created thing but a transformation of the form of a subject.[151] Because grace is not created in the sense applied to subsistent beings, but cocreated in a subject, Chauvet's criticisms of scholastic onto-theology for reducing grace to a thing would be misplaced, at least in relation to Thomas. Blankenhorn clarifies: "Grace is neither a thing nor a being, but a way of being. Grace is a 'that by which,' not a 'that which.'"[152] In fact, had Chauvet understood Thomas correctly on precisely this point he might have used this understanding of grace in his elaboration of a sacramental way of being or existential orientation.

Ultimately the shift in the language from disposing causality to perfecting instrumental causality in Thomas's theology of the sacraments is based on an improved understanding of the analogical relations between supernature and nature, primary and secondary causality, and principal and instrumental causality. One should not assume a dualism in these distinctions, as Chauvet seems to.[153] In Thomas any dualism is dissolved by the

[149] *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1, cited in *Symbol and Sacrament*, 16.

[150] Blankenhorn, "Instrumental Causality in the Sacraments," 267. Lonergan makes much the same point in his *Grace and Freedom*, to which we will turn in chap. 5.

[151] *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, a. 27, q. 3, ad 9: "Nam creari proprie est rei subsistentis, cuius est proprie esse et fieri: formae autem non subsistentes, sive substantiales sive accidentales, non proprie creantur, sed concreantur: sicut nec esse habent per se, sed in alio: et quamvis non habeant materiam ex qua, quae sit pars eorum, habent tamen materiam in qua, a qua dependent, et per cuius mutationem in esse educuntur; ut sic eorum fieri sit proprie subiecta eorum transmutari." See Blankenhorn, "Instrumental Causality in the Sacraments," 269 n. 50.

[152] Ibid., 270.

[153] See n. 146 above.

recognition of massive divine involvement in what is natural, secondary, and instrumental, especially in the Incarnation. "A powerful consequence of the hypostatic union is that by his human nature, Christ instrumentally operates that which is proper to God alone!"[154] Christ, a divine person with a human nature, communicates supernatural life humanly, a communication that continues in the sacraments.

In Chauvet's initial critique of sacramental causality putatively conceived according to onto-theological metaphysics, the idea of production or augmentation is seen as inadequate for talking about the relations between persons, because the beloved is not a product but a subject in process.[155] This is, of course, true. But what Chauvet fails to see here is that the relation between divine lover and human beloved is a relation across two ontological orders, supernature and nature. Both as created and as recipients of the divine self-communication, human beings *are* radically dependent on divine love for their being.[156] The beloved in this case are made beloved by God, not as completed projects *per se*, but as infinitely lovable in the eyes of the creator/lover. Chauvet is right to point out that the beloved is a subject, not a product. But he fails to note that a "beloved subject" is something different from just any "subject"; the "beloved subject" is complete in its lovableness as a beloved. There is nothing I can do to make myself infinitely lovable in the eyes of the one who loves me. My becoming as infinitely beloved is a matter of seeing myself as my lover sees me, as infinitely lovable. It is a process, to be sure, but one headed toward a vision of me that is not my own, in this case a divine vision that is already complete eschatologically.

That loving vision of God is fully expressed in Christ's passion and resurrection, from which the sacraments derive their power. But Chauvet's theology of the cross incorporates his critique of metaphysics in a way that is both startling and eventually unsatisfying. Relying heavily on Jürgen Moltmann's *The Crucified God*, Chauvet holds that the passion is constitu-

[154] Blankenhorn, "Instrumental Causality in the Sacraments," 278.

[155] See *SS*, 22–26, "The Reduction of the Symbolic Scheme to the Technical Scheme." Chauvet offers a lengthy refutation of what he believes is the productionist scheme in Plato's *Philebus*.

[156] Chauvet would help his case by clarifying his understanding of creation. His decision to focus solely on Heidegger's human being as a being-in-the-world leaves the question of creation aside and with it some fundamental positions on the divine-human relation. See Blankenhorn, "Instrumental Causality in the Sacraments," 280–81.

tive of God's Trinity.[157] Its redemptive function is to reveal this aspect of God as a self-effacing kenotic deity, not the god of our conceptual idolatries or political manipulations. Thus, in suffering at the hands of our idolatry in the passion, Christ exposes our idolatry inasmuch as we have crucified the true God in the name of "God." Chauvet asks, "How can we thereafter speak of God on the basis of the cross without being ourselves implicated down to the very marrow of our desire?"[158] Our complicity in the suffering of Christ is rooted in our desire to confine what is *other* within our own categories. The inescapable result of Chauvet's analysis is that all metaphysical thinking is implicated in the sufferings of Christ because the human "rage" to know crushes what is other, reducing it to sameness. The desire to know is thereby rendered sinful. Ultimately this interpretation reproves those, especially in the Christian tradition, who experience their desire to know as a questing after the hidden God in much the same way one searches out the heart of a beloved, not in order to possess it but in order *to give oneself* to the beloved more fully.[159]

4.2. Thinking against Knowing: A Performative Contradiction

In fact, Chauvet's interpretation of the passion reveals a performative contradiction in which he is involved from the start. As human we do not simply think, we desire to know and in fact do know things. We make judgments. Indeed, Chauvet makes a series of judgments throughout *Symbol and Sacrament*, even while embracing the humility necessary to let God be God. Nevertheless, the correspondence, or homology, between Chauvet's theological method and Heidegger's philosophical method is called into question by this performative contradiction. Heidegger's philosophical method prescinds from the fact that God has revealed God's self. Whether or not Heidegger's method is ultimately useful for theological inquiry is of less concern in the present work than the degree to which Chauvet's method limps under the weight of Heideggerian presuppositions that he reads into

[157] *SS*, 502.

[158] Ibid., 501.

[159] The connection between the desire to know and the desire for God as it emerges in Western Christianity is explored in Jean Leclerc, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, 3rd ed., trans. Catherine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982).

the Christian tradition, as for example in his theology of the passion. This is not to deny that Chauvet's project is worthwhile, especially in its therapeutic dimension. But if a deconstruction of the onto-theological presuppositions of Western metaphysics does help to counteract some real deficiencies in decadent scholasticism, and the kind of sacramental theology and liturgical practices it promoted, it does so in this case by simply caricaturing the achievement of Thomas Aquinas.

In the end Chauvet's work exhibits the all-too-frequent failure of postmodern reflection to come adequately to terms with its own claims. Chauvet makes a number of truth claims, indeed some very important ones, despite consistently rejecting the possibility of "knowing" in favor of a method of permanent questioning or "thinking." This is because he fails to attend fully to his own performance as a thinker/knower. He may even be willing, in fidelity to his method, to dispense with most of the philosophical foundations of *Symbol and Sacrament*. I will argue that Lonergan offers a way out of this contradiction by attending to human performance. Nevertheless, Chauvet builds on three critical insights from his thinking that are critical for any contemporary sacramental theology: (1) human knowledge of reality is contingent and always embedded in worlds mediated by and constituted by meaning; (2) theology is necessarily hermeneutical, involving the theologian in a circle (or spiral) of questions, answers, and further questions; it is not to be a closed system; and, most crucially, (3) the presence of the divine in history is a presence *as* absence, a truth revealed paradigmatically on the cross, and the key to a eucharistic eschatology.