"Lucid, compelling, and conversational, David Farina Turnbloom's *Speaking with Aquinas* connects the sacramental theology of the *Summa Theologica* with Thomas Aquinas's soteriology and ethics. By examining the relationship between grace and the virtues, Turnbloom uncovers the presuppositions of Thomas Aquinas's treatises on the sacraments and on the Eucharist. Aquinas's 'multiple grammars' allow him to treat the paradoxical agency of both Christ and the Christian in the sacraments. As a result, in this nuanced but accessible treatment, the Holy Spirit and the Christian life of faith emerge as the center of Aquinas's sacramental theology. *Speaking with Aquinas* reveals the links between Christology, sacrament, the Eucharist, and ethics, showing how Aquinas's sacramental soteriology can still speak to readers today."

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— James F. Keenan, SJ
Boston College

# Speaking with Aquinas

## A Conversation about Grace, Virtue, and the Eucharist

*David Farina Turnbloom*

Foreword by
*Bruce T. Morrill, SJ*


A Michael Glazier Book

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*This book is dedicated to all my teachers at:*

St. John's Elementary School,
Woodland Middle School,
Hibbing High School,
The University of St. Thomas,
Weston Jesuit School of Theology,
*and*
Boston College.

*I am still learning to recognize how much you gave me.*

# Contents

# FOREWORD

Good, powerful academic theology always draws from significant pastoral experience, from some well-founded practical motivation. This is no less true for sacramental-liturgical theology than for any other theological subdiscipline. Indeed, all too often the challenges posed to the sacramental-liturgical scholar from both without and within this particular field of theology arise from modern propensities for excessively dividing theory from practice. In the post-Enlightened modern academy, Catholic and Protestant, theological faculties tended for a combination of reasons to relegate the study of sacraments and liturgy, whether on the grounds of method or content or both, either to historical-material treatment or to the pastoral realm. In the latter case, there could arise the implication of a certain intellectual inferiority inherent to the subject matter. An air of defensiveness on both "sides," i.e., systematic versus liturgical theologians, could prove palpable in such situations, which, thankfully, now seem to be on the wane. The disciplinary quest and sporadic polemics over the nature and mission of practical theology have, for all their difficulties, at least helped systematic theologians explicitly acknowledge that practical concern (practice of the faith), however implicit, underlies their scholarship. Now, with vigor and enthusiasm, young theologians are following the example of their deceased predecessors in the *ressourcement* begun more than a half century ago, reaching back beyond rationalism and idealism for critical engagement in the liturgical practice–based thought of Christian theologians of the ancient through medieval eras.

Meanwhile liturgical theology has had its own internal problems, among which a significant one has comprised often misguided, pragmatic pursuits of palpable, practical results in the pastoral field. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy's mandate that "full and active participation in liturgical celebrations by all the people [be] the aim to be considered before all else" has, to follow the formulations of my doctoral mentor Don Saliers, suffered distortion by liturgists playing to surface-level feelings rather than to depth of emotion. Isolating parts or even the entirety of liturgy, not a few liturgical theologians (across denominations and continents) have worked at creating diagnostics for determining whether full, conscious, and active participation is actually taking place. This can amount to asking of the liturgy, and thereby of the people engaged in it, what it in itself, in its ritual components—and, thus, they in their ritual performances alone—cannot yield. The liturgy in itself is not the value. The liturgy (to invoke the other celebrated line in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*) as the source and summit of the life of the faithful is. Surely, the content and form of the liturgy—reformed and renewed—matter. But this type of "liturgiology" alone is incapable of informing the deeper connection between liturgy and life essential to gospel faith. Scholarly service to the character of lives the church hopes to foster through sacramental rites requires capacious reflection on the dynamics of grace as conveyed through scripture and tradition.

Study of the monumental achievement of Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae* is invaluable for gaining not only insight into the anthropological and ecclesial characteristics of the sacraments within the entire economy of grace but also methodological strategies for pursuing such insights. Every contributor to the development of sacramental theology over the past century has reckoned in one way or another with Aquinas. That David Turnbloom has been able to achieve such a fresh, insightful reading of the *Summa* is due not only to his carefully developed, keen theological intellect but also to the generous and compassionate pastoral and personal life of faith he brings to his scholarly work. His is a clear and compelling voice among a new generation of theologians practicing their vocations with an admirable desire to eschew ideological divides in the late-modern church while nonetheless asserting solid theological propositions and religious pedagogical strategies true to the demands of living the faith in our time. I am privileged to invite readers to enter

with Turnbloom into this particular exploration of grace, virtue, and sacrament so as to better recognize what a living body of Christ is and can be like.

Bruce T. Morrill, SJ
Edward A. Malloy Professor of Catholic Studies
Vanderbilt University

PREFACE

# Conversion through Conversation

I want to begin by making a distinction between what this book is *about* and what this book is *for*. In order to describe what this book is about, I would speak about the relationship between liturgical rituals and the moral identity of individuals and communities. As you will see, the content of these pages is primarily an analysis of the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas and the way he understands the relationships between grace, the virtues, and the Eucharist. However, behind the examinations that fill the following pages lies my preoccupation with the method of theological discourse. Put differently, this book is *for* theological conversation.

Through conversation we exchange ourselves with one another. We give of ourselves and simultaneously receive who we are. This book is, most fundamentally, aimed at facilitating the self-exchange that occurs in conversation. Etymologically speaking, conversation implies choosing to share life with another person. We receive ourselves in conversation because language gives us the possibility of experience. Sharing a common grammar (i.e., a common way of speaking) is the possibility of approximating a common experience. As such, conversation is also about living toward a common reality with someone. *Theological* conversation, then, is one way a community lives toward God. The purpose of this book is to provide a way of speaking that aids theological conversation.

In the end, I am most concerned with the effect the following pages might have on existing conversations about Christian worship and

its relationship to the lives of Christians. Specifically, my hope is that this book will help others see the good in the positions they fear. Seeing the good in a position we dislike allows us to overcome the biases that would keep us from conversion through conversation. This book is an attempt to mitigate the biases that plague contemporary liturgical theology, thereby helping to overcome that which blocks our conversion to greater communion.

INTRODUCTION

# Finding a Lost Voice

The theological importance of St. Thomas Aquinas need not be defended. However, his continued relevance as a positive resource for sacramental theology at the beginning of the twenty-first century is not as self-evident. Since the Second Vatican Council, a plurality of grammars has developed within sacramental theology. Certain Thomists have scrupulously retained a scholastic grammar, while other theologians, influenced by *Nouvelle Theologie*, have opted for grammars more heavily rooted in patristic theology. Still others have adopted grammars that take much influence from more modern sources such as phenomenology, anthropology, linguistics, and sociology. In this introduction, I simply want to point out the obvious: this plurality exists and causes a problem in need of a solution.

Broadly speaking, this book seeks to offer a grammar that helps bridge the disconnection between other grammars. In this brief introduction, I will justify such a project by pointing out that there is a problem, namely, a disconnection between certain grammars of sacramental theology. I will then argue that this problem is, if not overcome, at least mitigated by the use of a common grammar.

## I. Grammars

I would like to begin by being clear about how I will use the word "grammar." Simply put, a grammar dictates the ability of its lexicon to mediate meaning. Brian D. Robinette defines a grammar as "a deep

structural tendency in expression or thought; a characteristic and coherent pattern of understanding; an identifiable and habitual mode of articulation which results in relatively consistent thematization."[1] Or, put more simply, a theological grammar is "a characteristic pattern of Christian speech."[2] I will not use the term "grammar" as strictly as some linguists might demand (e.g., I will not spend time distinguishing between syntax, morphology, phonology, etc.). *Rather, I use the term to emphasize the importance of recognizing patterns in the relationship between words.* Fidelity to an author's thought demands far more than adoption of a vocabulary; it demands scrutiny of the vocabulary's application. While individual words are used to mediate meaning, it is the grammar within which a word is used that determines the possibility and parameters of that mediation. Grammars are more than just word choice; grammars include words, the relationship between those words, and the rules that govern those relationships. To alter the relationships between words is to alter the grammar, and to alter a grammar is to alter (whether positively or negatively) its ability to mediate meaning.

Here, I will briefly highlight three points about the use of grammars. First, grammars dictate the possibility and content of thought. As George Lindbeck puts it, "There are numberless thoughts we cannot think, sentiments we cannot have, and realities we cannot perceive unless we learn to use the appropriate symbol systems."[3] In this passage, Lindbeck is speaking more broadly about cultural and linguistic forms, but his claim is easily applied to grammars as well. Adopting a vocabulary and a particular understanding of how those words relate opens the mind to the possibility of understanding. To paraphrase one of Lindbeck's illustrations, imagine that a man who is completely unfamiliar with sports is shown a video clip of a game in which a player uses a stick to hit a ball into a giant crowd of people. If the man is then asked to explain the phrase "ground rule double," he will fail because he does not have the appropriate grammar needed to understand his experience of the game. If the man is then given a

[1] Brian D. Robinette, *Grammars of Resurrection* (St. Louis, MO: Crossroad, 2009), 184.

[2] Ibid., 181.

[3] George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984), 34.

rule book for golf and asked to use that rule book to explain the phrase "ground rule double," he will fail again. This time, however, not only will he fail to explain "ground rule double," but it is quite likely that he will incorrectly describe the game in terms of the rule book that he has been given. So, while grammars make understanding and communication possible, grammars taken out of context invariably lead to misunderstanding and miscommunication.

The second point that I wish to highlight is the risk involved when using multiple grammars. Returning to Lindbeck, we have seen that "it is necessary to have the means for expressing an experience in order to have it, and the richer our expressive or linguistic system, the more subtle, varied, and differentiated can be our experience."[4] Put in terms of grammar, the presence and utilization of a plurality of grammars can afford the mind deeper and more nuanced understanding. For example, a human being can be described through many different grammars. Taxonomically speaking, a human is a *Homo sapien*. Chemically speaking, a human is a mass of molecules that are largely based on carbon. Theologically speaking, a human is made in the *imago Dei*. Anthropologically speaking, a human is a storytelling animal. When we adopt differing grammars, we open up the possibility for greater depth of understanding and greater breadth of communication.

The use of a particular grammar provides an epistemological framework that constitutes a subject's perspective. The use of multiple grammars can provide multiple perspectives. While there is obvious benefit in having multiple grammars, there is also risk. The more distinct two grammars are, the more difficult communication between them becomes. For example, a physicist will be able to discuss color more readily with an ophthalmologist than with a painter. The common use of a scientific grammar that understands color primarily in terms of wavelength will facilitate communication. While multiple grammars may afford deeper understanding, that does not necessarily imply a greater ability to communicate that understanding. Simply put, certain grammars are more compatible than others.

[4] Ibid., 37.

The third point is the danger implicit in absolutizing a particular grammar. To absolutize a grammar is to afford it a place of such privilege that it leads to the exclusion of other grammars, whether intentionally or accidentally. While I will return to this danger later in this introduction, for now I would like to simply point out that excluding other grammars limits the possibility of thought. Admittedly, there are times when such limitations are advisable. It is not controversial to claim that one of the main functions of doctrine is to limit the use of speech.[5] However, it should be self-evident that when treating a Mystery, the absolutizing of any grammar is detrimental. In article 2, question 1 of the *Tertia Pars*, Aquinas points out ten different perspectives from which the incarnation can be explained as being "necessary." He then ends the article by pointing out that these ten perspectives are in no way exhaustive; nor does he privilege one perspective to the detriment of any other. Aquinas understands that in dealing with Mystery, the use of language is an exercise in approximation in which careful verbosity brings advantage. What I am *not* doing in this book is retrieving a grammar to be absolutized. On the contrary, the grammar I will retrieve is always to be used in cooperation with others.

## II. Scholastic Grammars

I want to be clear about what I am *not* doing when I talk about "scholastic" grammars of the sacraments. I am not trying to define a type. *Rather, I am highlighting the tendency in which a dogmatized scholastic vocabulary is given such privilege that its use is seen as prerequisite to authenticity.* Put another way, failure to explicitly use this scholastic vocabulary is to automatically invite a hermeneutic of suspicion. In order to provide a simple example of this tendency, I turn to Pope Paul VI's 1965 papal encyclical, *Mysterium Fidei*.

In this text, Paul VI focuses on the importance of language when talking about the Eucharist. Of particular note is section 24:

[5] The potential danger in this view of doctrine is the tendency to mistake lexicon for grammar. For example, saying that Jesus sinned is instantly problematic. Nevertheless, before such a statement can be deemed heretical (i.e., be excluded), the word "sinned" must be defined in terms of its relations in the grammar being used compared to the use of ἁμαρτίας in the grammar used in Heb 4:15.

> And so the rule of language which the Church has established through the long labor of centuries, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and which she has confirmed with the authority of the Councils, and which has more than once been the watchword and banner of orthodox faith, is to be religiously preserved, and no one may presume to change it at his own pleasure or under the pretext of new knowledge. Who would ever tolerate that the dogmatic formulas used by the ecumenical councils for the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation be judged as no longer appropriate for men of our times, and let others be rashly substituted for them? In the same way, it cannot be tolerated that any individual should on his own authority take something away from the formulas which were used by the Council of Trent to propose the Eucharistic Mystery for our belief. These formulas—like the others that the Church used to propose the dogmas of faith—express concepts that are not tied to a certain specific form of human culture, or to a certain level of scientific progress, or to one or another theological school. Instead they set forth what the human mind grasps of reality through necessary and universal experience and what it expresses in apt and exact words, whether it be in ordinary or more refined language. For this reason, these formulas are adapted to all men of all times and all places.[6]

Throughout the entire encyclical, there is an emphasis on a pseudo-grammar of "sacrifice" and "substance."[7] The text asserts that the Mystery of the Eucharist is most properly understood and expressed

[6] *Mysterium Fidei* 24.

[7] I use the term "pseudo-grammar" because specific terms are defended through an appeal to (what is portrayed as) their univocal use throughout Christian tradition. In other words, emphasis is placed on words and not their historically and culturally conditioned relationships to one another. This problematic tendency finds it roots in the encyclical's fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of language. The notion that formulaic language can "set forth what the human mind grasps of reality through necessary and universal experience and what it expresses in apt and exact words, whether it be in ordinary or more refined language" misunderstands language, seeing it as a tool and not mediation. For more on this misunderstanding, see Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), chap. 3.

by utilizing these grammars.[8] Any future development that might add clarity must be a development of these dogmatic *formulae*. Simply put, Paul VI moves beyond lauding a traditional grammar and its beauty to absolutizing that grammar.

Adopting this tendency, other theologians have made similar claims about the foundational role of scholastic grammars. For example, in his essay "Transubstantiation Revisited," Reinhard Hütter states:

> The *intellectus fidei*, however, relies on *received* reality—that is another way of saying *objective* reality—and this reliance is accounted for in our case, Eucharistic transubstantiation, by a most central *metaphysical* principle, a principle that antecedes and transcends culture as much as history, human subjectivity as much as the philosophy *du jour*, in short, the metaphysical principle of *substance*.[9]

For Hütter, the metaphysical concepts of substance, accident, and quantity are indespensible. This metaphysical grammar is not merely one grammar among equals, all of which can be utilized in eucharistic theology. What we see here is a radical claim about the primacy and indispensability of scholastic vocabulary. The vocabulary of scholastic metaphysical inquiry, in Hütter's view, is not so much a grammar as it is an innate aspect of the human intellect. He maintains that "metaphysical contemplation . . . remains indispensable in properly understanding the inner constitution of the reality on which the human intellect qua intellect . . . relies in its very act of understanding."[10] For Paul VI and Hütter, grammars that fail to utilize metaphysical language when discussing the Eucharist are disabled. As such, scholastic grammars are absolutized, and this absolutizatition has consequences. As Lindbeck points out, the grammars we use dictate what experiences we can have. The same is true of these scholastic grammars. When we examine the Eucharist solely through scholastic

[8] Cf. section 39 in which "real" presence is described as "presence par excellence, *because it is substantial*" (my emphasis).

[9] Reinhard Hütter, "Transubstantiation Revisited," *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life*, ed. Matthew Levering and Reinhard Hütter (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 27.

[10] Ibid.

grammars of substance, the manner in which we experience and understand the eucharistic presence of Jesus Christ will suffer the influence of these grammars.

A simple example: in his 2003 encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Pope John Paul II says that "from [the Eucharist] the Church draws her life. From this 'Living bread' she draws her nourishment."[11] Here, John Paul follows the tendency in eucharistic theology that is a consequence of absolutizing scholastic grammars of substance. In this sentence, the Eucharist, a ritual, is confused with the consecrated species. The rite is replaced by one of its parts.

In contrast, the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy famously asserted a fourfold presence of Christ in the liturgy.[12] According to this document, Jesus Christ is present in the assembly, in the proclaimation of the Scriptures, in the presiding minister, and in the consecrated bread and wine. Absolutizing the scholastic grammar of substance leads eucharistic theology to myopically focus on the substantial presence of Christ that subsists in the consecrated bread and wine. Affording such privilege to grammars of substantial presence does damage to what sacramental theologian John Baldovin has called a "many faceted jewel." The fourfold presence of Christ is replaced by a singular, circumscribable presence. When these scholastic grammars are absolutized, perspectives are marginalized and lost. In turn, there is a tendency to reduce an elaborate and historically rich sacrament to a substantial presence or a moment of consecration.

This use of scholastic grammars finds its generation in what I call a preferential option for the language of tradition. Dogmatized language should indeed be given privilege. However, if privilege is to remain a preferential option, it must always avoid absolutization. While these scholastic grammars arise from a preferential option, the option is quickly turned into an exclusive obligation. Sacramental theology then finds itself carrying an absolutized grammar rather than walking with a living tradition. I want to be clear: I am not setting scholastic grammars up as a straw man to be dismissed. On the contrary, later in this project I will forward Thomistic grammars as particularly helpful to modern sacramental theology. Rather, I am

[11] *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 7.

[12] *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7.

highlighting scholastic grammars that tend to be absolutized and criticizing them *as absolutized*. When these scholastic grammars are absolutized, any contemporary sacramental theology which fails to incorporate these grammars becomes suspect.

## III. Modern Grammars

If scholastic grammars cease to be options and are absolutized into obligations, then any eucharistic theology that fails to incorporate scholastic grammars falls short in its ability to express the sacrament *par excellence*. Such disabled grammars, then, open themselves up to suspicion. Anyone familiar with the theological context from which *Mysterium Fidei* emerged is aware of the eucharistic theologies to which it was responding. When Paul VI rhetorically asks "who would ever tolerate that the dogmatic formulas used by the ecumenical councils for the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation be judged as no longer appropriate for men of our times, and let others be rashly substituted for them," he has specific people in mind. In this section, I will examine three theologians and their eucharistic theologies. As with the previous section, I am not concerned with the intricacies of the eucharistic theologies mentioned. Rather, they are being mentioned to demonstrate the existent plurality in eucharistic theology that has arisen in the last century of Roman Catholic sacramental theology.

Earlier I mentioned that some modern theologians have developed grammars for eucharistic theology that are heavily rooted in patristic sources. The first of our three examples of modern grammars of the Eucharist comes from one such theologian. In 1944, the French Jesuit Henri de Lubac published a book titled *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*.[13] In this text, de Lubac bemoans the loss of an intimate connection between the sacramental body of Christ and the ecclesial body of Christ. This loss is manifested in history by the shift in use of the words *corpus mysticum* ("mystical body") and *corpus verum* ("true body"). Once used to signify Christ's presence in the Christian community, *corpus verum* gradually came to signify the presence of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine.

[13] Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages; Historical Survey*, trans. Gemma Simmonds (London: SCM Press, 2006).

Likewise, the words *corpus mysticum* began to be used in reference to the Christian community rather than the consecrated species. Simply put, in the early Church the "true body" of Christ was the Christian community and the "mystical body" of Christ was consecrated bread and wine. By the Middle Ages, the designations had been switched.

This *ressourcement* project laid the ground for later theologians like J. M. R. Tillard who would begin studying the relationship between the Church and the Eucharist as it was treated in patristic writing.[14] These historical projects have become the foundation for the retrieval of grammars that seek to understand the Eucharist and Christ's presence within it. For our current purposes, it is most important to note that these projects offer us grammars that are not scholastic yet claim to speak about the Eucharist and Christ's presence with validity that is at least equal to the metaphysical language of scholasticism.

Twenty-three years after de Lubac published *Corpus Mysticum* and six years after the opening of the Second Vatican Council, the Dutch theologian Edward Schillebeeckx published the book *Christus' Tengenwoordigheid in de Eucharistie* (later published in English as *The Eucharist*). In this work, Schillebeeckx forwards what he boldly calls "a new approach to the formulation of faith."[15] He sets out to offer a formulation of the doctrine of Christ's real presence that "will not be from the philosophy of nature, but from anthropology."[16] Like de Lubac, Schillebeeckx focuses on making the relationship between the Church and the Eucharist primary. By beginning with anthropology, Schillebeeckx moves toward an understanding of eucharistic conversion that is constructed in terms of phenomenology, meaning, and signification. While Schillebeeckx defends the need for a theory of transubstantiation,[17] his construction of a theory of transignification is carried out employing a grammar that is not scholastic yet claims to formulate the Church's faith with equal depth and precision. This turn to the anthropological is an instance of modern eucharistic theology's willingness to engage its context as a positive source. As one

[14] Cf. J. M. R.Tillard, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001).

[15] Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist* (New York: Continuum Books, 1968), 87.

[16] Ibid., 93.

[17] Ibid., 150.

might expect, this willingness is a catalyst for the development of multiple grammars.

Finally, the French liturgical theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet has adopted the theory of symbolic exchange to examine eucharistic rituals.[18] Unlike Schillebeeckx, Chauvet is less conservative when it comes to retaining the need for a theory of transubstantiation. Putting Chauvet's critiques of scholasticism aside for the moment, I want to highlight the fact that Chauvet's grammars are, like those of Schillebeeckx, rooted in an honest willingness to engage the reality of eucharistic theology's modern context. Specifically, Chauvet treats the sacrament as the ritual that it is. Heavily relying on the anthropological "turn to the subject," Chauvet explores the Eucharist as a historically and culturally conditioned ritual performed by a communal subject. By first establishing a method in which the sacraments are seen as rituals that mediate the relationship between God and Christian community, Chauvet develops a grammar of symbolic exchange and Christian identity. The sacraments are examined in terms of their role in this economy of religious identity. In short, Chauvet concerns himself primarily with what the sacraments are as celebrations of the Church, as opposed to doctrines discussed by theologians.

This brief description of Chauvet's project should make it evident that there are fundamental differences between the grammars employed by Chauvet and the scholastic grammars we previously mentioned. However, it is clear that Chauvet is not simply trying to add clarity to traditional doctrinal formulae; his project is far more constructive. Likewise, his sacramental theology is not weakened by its departure from metaphysical language.

These three modern grammars of the Eucharist do not view themselves as disabled. They are forwarded as viable options for engaging the Eucharist theologically and communicating that faith. Their distance from the scholastic primacy of metaphysical inquiry is not seen as inhibitive. On the contrary, such distance is almost always a reaction to a need left unfulfilled by such metaphysical inquiry. Whether that unmet need be ecclesiological, as with de Lubac; cognitive, as with Schillebeeckx; or pastoral/ethical, as with Chauvet, modern grammars arise to effectively communicate a faith in a way that

[18] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*.

addresses that need. And so, there arises a plurality of grammars. Catholic sacramental theology finds itself in a state of extensive plurality—a state in which not everyone is comfortable.

## IV. The Problem: Lacking Context

This plurality has led to the problem of a twofold disconnection. First, there is a contextual disconnection being ignored in the transplantation of certain scholastic grammars. Second, there is a disconnection between the grammars being used in Roman Catholic sacramental theology today. The latter disconnection issues from the former.

Transplanting a grammar is what happens when a grammar is retrieved from one context and inserted into another with little or no attention paid to its relationship to that new context. For example, if a theologian began using terms like "spectroscopic lines," "electron configurations," and "angular momentum quantum numbers" to talk about the consecrated bread and wine without any previous discussion of what those terms mean or how they are being applied within a theological conversation, that would be an instance of transplanting a chemistry grammar of orbitals into a theological context. The disconnection that results from transplanting a grammar is a consequence of failing to translate that grammar *for its new context*. What *Mysterium Fidei* attempts to do is transplant scholastic grammars. Denying the historically conditioned nature of metaphysical language, the encyclical tries to rehabilitate these scholastic grammars through historical theology and explanation. As Edward Schillebeeckx has said, "It is difficult to see how simply repeating the dogma word for word in our present age could do anything but impose an unnecessary and unjustified burden on our Christian faith."[19] Schillebeeckx points out that scholastic theology's use of Aristotelian metaphysics was a new way of understanding the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He does this because he goes on to offer his own new approach to eucharistic presence which takes anthropology as its point of departure.[20] The point that we must stress, however, is

[19] Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, 90.
[20] Ibid., 92.

how Schillebeeckx understood the newness of these formulations of the faith. It will be beneficial to quote him at length on this issue.

> Only a generation of believers living at a later period in the development of human consciousness and therefore further removed from the Aristotelian metaphysical philosophy of nature in its medieval form—and capable at least of seeing this philosophy more clearly if they have not rejected it altogether—can be aware that this medieval mode of thought was historically conditioned and hence, in the concrete sense, a form of "wording" for what the Council of Trent was really trying to express. But, in this case, this later generation will not be able to grasp the genuine *content of faith* of the Council of Trent if they methodically set aside their own (and later) way of thinking. If we, living in the twentieth century, are to discover the genuine content of the Tridentine faith in connection with Christ's presence in the Eucharist, we must also enter intimately into this content of faith, reassessing it and making it actual and present, because we can never really grasp at it in its "pure state."[21]

Newness, for Schillebeeckx, is not radical (i.e., a complete break with tradition), but it is honest. Modern eucharistic theology cannot transplant the grammars of the past into the present and expect that they will function in the same way as they once did; we must give assent to the loss that comes with time. To make something new is to make the past "actual and present" within and for the history of the present.

When grammars are transplanted, they are radically decontextualized. Denying their need for context (i.e., claiming their universality and absolutizing that grammar) does not undo that damage. Language is of a particular historical moment. To responsibly move a grammar from one context to another can be done only through translation. Or, as Schillebeeckx has put it: "The contemporary context of our life leads us to reinterpret the world of ideas with which the dogma of transubstantiation has come down to us, precisely in order to be able to preserve in a pure form the basic meaning of the dogma and to make it capable of being freshly experienced by modern man."[22] Translation and reinterpretation are done from and for a

[21] Ibid., 62.
[22] Ibid., 90.

particular context. *Ressourcement* theologians like de Lubac do not want to transplant patristic grammars into our modern discourse. They recognize the impossibility of such a project. The defining characteristic of true *ressourcement* is maintaining the object of study as a source to be translated, as a source from which to progressively develop a meaningful theology. When a grammar is transplanted, its contextuality is denied. To deny contextuality is to claim universality. Any grammar that is universalized is absolutized. As I pointed out above, the plurality of grammars in modern eucharistic theology includes such transplanted and absolutized scholastic grammars. The decontextualized state of those grammars brings about a disconnection in communication between these scholastic grammars and other modern grammars.

Alasdair MacIntyre, in his book *After Virtue*, points out that ethical issues are often unresolved within intellectual communities when proponents of opposing sides refuse to recognize and acknowledge the simple fact that each side is employing a grammar that is incompatible with the other's grammar.[23] In short, for conversation to be meaningful and productive, a common grammar is needed. As I pointed out above, it is possible to use multiple grammars when treating a subject. It is also possible, however, to have two grammars that are mostly incompatible. Difficulties arise when dialogue partners are using grammars that do not translate easily or are incompatible. This incompatibility between scholastic grammars and other modern grammars is rooted in the lack of a shared context. Any time a grammar is absolutized, the shared context that is a precondition for communication is denied. The criticism, then, that modern grammars want to level at scholasticism cannot find (acknowledged) footing from which to begin. Likewise, there is nothing any nonscholastic grammar could say that would mitigate the suspicion earned by being a contextualized grammar.

What I want to do in this book is show that modern grammars are not disabled. They offer us a way to understand the Eucharist that is at least as robust as the language of the *Terita Pars*. Likewise, by retrieving the context of the scholastic grammars found in the *Tertia Pars*, I want to defend them from some of the modern critiques. If,

[23] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 8.

by retrieving a Thomistic grammar of grace and virtue, we can show the similarities between these disconnected grammars, then we have moved toward leveling the playing field between the two grammars. By retrieving a grammar of grace and virtue as the context for the grammars in the *Tertia Pars*, I attempt to show that those grammars are indeed contextualized grammars. If they are contextualized grammars, such recognition is a recognition of their possible translation.

## V. The Solution: Finding a Lost Voice

In an article titled "Whether the Eucharist Is Necessary for Salvation?" Aquinas sums up in six words what is, for him, at the heart of the Eucharist: "Spiritual food changes man into itself."[24] For Aquinas, the sacrament of the Eucharist has as its end the human person's union with the Godhead manifested by the unity of the mystical body that is Christ's Church. While reflecting on this point may seem to be simply belaboring the obvious, it is a common tendency in eucharistic theology to allow the *means* to this end (i.e., "Real Presence") to obfuscate the true purpose of the Eucharist—unity.

The retrieval of a Thomistic grammar of grace and virtue is not an abandonment of the scholastic language dogmatized by Trent. On the contrary, this retrieval is an attempt to honestly translate the sacramental theology of Thomas without irresponsible transplantation. More and more, however, such references to Thomas are presented as an apology in which the sacramental grammar of scholasticism (e.g., accident, substance, form, matter, etc.) is reworked, not to communicate what Thomas meant, but to make that grammar meaningful to those who hear it with a modern ear.[25] Once dogmatized by Trent, this scholastic grammar of the Eucharist laid a claim on Roman Catholic theology that has primarily manifested itself in preoccupation with terms rather than with meaning. In other words, adherence to a particular grammar is given privilege above and beyond the

[24] S.T. III.73.3.ad2. Quotations from the *Summa Theologiae* are from *The Summa Theologiae of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Latin-English Edition* (Scotts Valley, CA: NovAntiqua, 2008).

[25] An excellent example of this mentality would be the twentieth-century debate between Carlo Colombo and Filipo Selvaggi. For an insightful examination of this debate and its continued significance, see P. J. Fitzpatrick, *In Breaking of Bread: The Eucharist and Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), chap. 1.

success of communicating the ideas that particular grammar was created to mediate.

Are grammars important? Certainly. Can we simply disregard grammars that are so deeply traditional as to have been dogmatized? Certainly not. Nevertheless, we must always guard against any tendency to mistake the grammar for the message, the medium for the mediated. Such a tendency confuses repetition with being traditional. The only way to truly honor a grammar is to communicate, as faithfully as possible, the message it mediates; this is called translation. Translation is not only necessary; it is unavoidable. We must be honest about the fact that we can no longer hear the Latin or Greek words of doctrine in the same way they were heard by the people who wrote them. Any notion that adopting a universal language might free us from the need for translation ignores the necessary relationship between culture and language. We must recognize and affirm that, in translation, change occurs. Not only can we say that the Church does change; we must say that it can do nothing but change. Failure to change is a failure to live.[26] So, when we seek to be traditional, our first instinct should not be to look to the *Enchiridion Symbolorum* for the word bank we have been handed by our Tradition. Rather, we should look to Tradition for the truths it passes on to us through the mediation of an inculturated and contingent grammar.

Interpretation must precede translation if translation is to be accomplished honestly, because, in the end, our only choices are good translation or bad translation. All this has been to say that *the absence of a particular grammar does not mean it is has been dismissed*. On the contrary; it is very possible that an absent grammar is exerting a great amount of influence in any given work of theology. Likewise, the explicit employment of a grammar does not necessarily imply fidelity to that grammar *qua* grammar. If we insist on utilizing a grammar to the detriment of proper translation, we run the great risk of abusing and obfuscating that doctrine.

At the beginning of this introduction, I said that, broadly speaking, this book seeks to offer a grammar that helps bridge the disconnection between grammars. Speaking more specifically, this book seeks

[26] For a brief discussion of the importance of change, see Micahel Himes, *The Mystery of Faith: An Introduction to Catholicism* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messanger Press, 2004).

to retrieve a Thomistic grammar of grace and virtue that will help bridge the disconnection between scholastic grammars of eucharistic presence and modern grammars. The retrieved grammar will function to help translate the disconnected grammars in a way that allows for meaningful dialogue. I say that this retrieval is tantamount to finding a lost voice, not because the Thomistic grammars of grace and virtue have gone unnoticed and undiscussed (far from it!), but because these grammars have gone largely unnoticed and undiscussed in connection with Aquinas's treatment of the sacraments.

By constructively using the grammars of grace and virtue, I will show that Aquinas's way of addressing grace and the virtues still has much to offer contemporary sacramental theology. In short, this book provides a retrieval of a more robust Thomistic sacramental theology. By refusing to be confined to what is explicitly sacramental in the *Summa Theologiae*, I will have opened up the traditional scholastic grammar in a way that encourages other approaches to sacramental theology. This grammar both protects against narrow readings of Aquinas's sacramental theology and broadens the spectrum of issues that can and ought to be included in sacramental theology. Replacing the scholastic obsession with transubstantiation with Aquinas's obsession (i.e., charity) not only removes a stumbling block for Roman Catholic theological conversations but also can serve to mitigate a point of ecumenical division by offering a theology better equipped to engage the plurality of grammars being employed in the discussion.

CHAPTER ONE

# Why the *Secunda Pars*?

Within the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas *explicitly* treats the sacraments in the *Tertia Pars*.[1] To rely solely on the eucharistic theology presented in the *Tertia Pars*, however, is to overlook the sacramental theology of the *Secunda Pars*. The first section of this chapter will provide an example of the problems that can arise if the *Tertia Pars* is isolated from the *Secunda Pars*. Louis-Marie Chauvet's critique of Aquinas's eucharistic theology is an excellent example of the danger that results from focusing too narrowly on the scholastic grammars that permeate the *Tertia Pars*. By then turning to a close reading of the sacramental theology found in the *Tertia Pars*, the remaining sections of the chapter substantiate the claim that the *Secunda Pars* is where Aquinas *implicitly* treats the sacraments insofar as it contextualizes the *Tertia Pars*. Specifically, the *Secunda Pars* offers us a teleological framework (constructed using grammars of grace and virtue) that can be used as the hermeneutical key for understanding the content of the *Tertia Pars*. By using the *Tertia Pars* to define the Eucharist as a sacrament meant to increase charity, this chapter justifies the subsequent chapters' turn to the *Secunda Pars.*

[1] S.T. III.60-90. It should be pointed out that throughout this chapter when I refer to "sacraments," unless otherwise specified, I am referring to the seven sacraments of the New Law.

## I. Lamenting the Loss of a Loss[2]

The French theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet has, in more than one instance, critiqued Aquinas's treatment of the Eucharist in which, Chauvet argues, Aquinas essentially "wrings the neck of Aristotelianism" in a quest to objectify the substantial presence of Christ in the bread and wine.[3] The critiques forwarded by Chauvet point out a tendency of Aquinas's eucharistic theology in which the relationship between Christ's ecclesial body and Christ's eucharistic body is made secondary to the relationship between Christ's historical body and Christ's eucharistic body. Put simply, Chauvet laments the loss of a Eucharist of and for the Church.

### *1. The Deadly Dichotomy*

The main critique Chauvet levels at Aquinas is that the lens through which he understands the sacrament of the Eucharist has fundamentally shifted in a way not beneficial to the Church. Namely, the Eucharist is first and foremost seen as a sacrament in which the historical body of Christ becomes substantially present. The Eucharist is fundamentally a sacrament in which the historical body of Jesus becomes substantially present in the species of bread and wine through a moment called transubstantiation. The fact that this is most often the primary way of describing the Eucharist signals a shift away from a eucharistic theology in which the Eucharist is first and foremost seen as sacrament of charity meant to bring about the unity of the Church.

To understand this critique more fully, I begin with a discussion of what Chauvet, following Henri de Lubac, calls the threefold Body of Christ.

> It was common for theological tradition to distinguish a threefold body of Christ: (1) his historical and glorious body; (2) his Eucharistic body which was called "mystical body" up to the

[2] This section is largely taken from David Farina Turnbloom, "A Defense of Aquinas' Treatment of the Eucharist," *Studia Liturgica* 43, no. 1 (2013): 93–110.

[3] Louis-Marie Chauvet, "The Broken Bread as Theological Figure of Eucharistic Presence," in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, ed. L. Boeve and L. Leijssen (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 245.

> twelfth century because it is "his body in mystery," that is to say, in sacrament; (3) his ecclesial body, growing throughout history.[4]

The term "body of Christ" was used with equal validity to describe each designation of the threefold body. For clarity's sake, I would like to mention that throughout this chapter and those that follow this threefold body is referred to by using the terms historical body, eucharistic body, and ecclesial body. In his text *Corpus Mysticum*, de Lubac points out that from the early centuries of the Christian tradition there is a fundamental relationship between the eucharistic body of Christ and the ecclesial body of Christ. He begins his text by highlighting this relationship: "In the thinking of the whole of Christian antiquity, the Eucharist and the Church are linked. . . . The Eucharist corresponds to the Church as cause to effect, as means to end, as sign to reality."[5] In other words, the ecclesial body of Christ (i.e., the Church) was an intrinsic aspect of the sacrament of the Eucharist. Or, in Chauvet's words, "For the Fathers, the ecclesial body was the 'truth' of the eucharistic body."[6] For these early theologians, it would not have been possible to speak of the Eucharist without speaking (at least implicitly) about the Church.

The problem, as Chauvet and de Lubac see it, arises in the eleventh century with Berengar of Tours. Berengar, in opposition to the rising obsession with the relationship between the historical body of Christ and the eucharistic body of Christ, began to deny the eucharistic "real" presence in order to fight the loss of focus on the ecclesial body. In other words, in order to pull everyone's eyes away from the consecrated host and return their eyes to the Church, he denied that there was anything to look at in the host. To his overreaction, Christian tradition went on to add its own; the result was what de Lubac calls the "deadly dichotomy" between Christ's ecclesial body and the eucharistic body. To correct the heresy of Berengar, theologians intensified what Berengar had been trying to correct: they not only continued to focus their attention on the relationship between the historical

[4] Ibid., 139.

[5] Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages; Historical Survey*, trans. Gemma Simmonds (London: SCM Press, 2006), 13.

[6] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 139.

body and the eucharistic body, but they also began to obfuscate the relationship between the eucharistic body and the ecclesial body in order to avoid any semblance of heresy. Using the words of de Lubac, Chauvet summarizes this shift:

> About this, Henri de Lubac says that from the end of the twelfth century on a "deadly dichotomy" between the eucharistic body and the ecclesial body became firmly rooted. At the same time symbolism became "something artificial and accessory . . . the essential bond that joined eucharistic worship to the unity of the Church disappeared." Thus, "the ultimate reality of the sacrament," that is to say, the unity of the ecclesial body, "that which formerly was its reality and its truth par excellence, is ejected from the sacrament itself." It does remain its finality; but from then on, it does not belong to its "intrinsic symbolism."[7]

The unity of the Church, then, is no longer the truth of the sacrament. For the patristic authors, the Church was the true body (*corpus verum*) given through the eucharistic body (*corpus mysticum*), and both of these were intrinsic to the sacrament. By the thirteenth century, the "truth" of the sacrament has been redefined. According to the Scholastics, the *corpus verum* is the consecrated bread and wine, while the Church is now called the *corpus mysticum*.[8] The Church, then, is excised from the sacrament itself; the true presence of Christ is now to be primarily sought, not in the lives of the members of the Church, but upon the altar and in the hands of the clergy.

As a result of this development in eucharistic understanding, what Chauvet calls an "ultra-realist" approach to understanding the Eucharist was given more and more validity. The flesh of Christ was seen as hidden "in there somewhere." It is this development that incited the theological treatises that sought to objectify the intelligibility of holding this belief, the most famous of which is Aquinas's theory of transubstantiation. While there is no need to rehearse this theory here, it must be said that while Aquinas pushed the limits of his intellectual powers in order to demonstrate the objectivity of

[7] Ibid.

[8] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 294.

Christ's "real" presence in the Eucharist, he was a far cry from the ultra-realism so prevalent at the time in which he was writing. Chauvet points out that

> the novelty [of the language of transubstantiation] consists in the fact that compared with the theology of the pre-scholastic period, the ontological expression of the presence can be understood only as outside any physicalism and any more or less gross representation. Transubstantiation thus has a meaning diametrically opposed to the one often attributed to it.[9]

This is to say that, for Aquinas, claiming that Christ is substantially present in the Eucharist does not mean that Christ is present in the way that something is present in a particular location. In fact, Aquinas explicitly denies this manner of understanding Christ's real presence. "Christ's body is not in this sacrament in the same way as a body is in a place, which by its dimensions is commensurate with a place; but in a special manner which is proper to this sacrament."[10] While one might defend Aquinas from being labeled an ultra-realist, it is harder to save him, however, from the accusation that he stresses the relationship between the historical body and the eucharistic body. In the following chapters (especially chap. 5) I take pains to illustrate that Aquinas does not ignore the relationship between the ecclesial body and the eucharistic body, but for now it must not be denied that Aquinas is guilty of focusing intently on the relationship between the historical and eucharistic bodies of Christ. His extensive treatment of transubstantiation is clearly a symptom of the "deadly dichotomy" that had developed in reaction to the good-intentioned, if imprudent, Berengar.

## *2. Consequences of the Deadly Dichotomy*

For Chauvet, this "deadly dichotomy" is perhaps most clearly visible not in Aquinas's construction of transubstantiation but in his claim that the sacrament is completed with the consecration of the host. "The sacrament of the Eucharist is completed [*perficitur*] in the

[9] Ibid., 386.
[10] S.T. III.75.1.ad3.

very consecration of the matter, whereas the other sacraments are completed in the application of the matter for the sanctifying of the individual."[11] After the ordained minister has recited the dominical words, whose power brings about the twofold miracle of transubstantiation and the providential maintaining of the bread and wine's quantity, the sacrament is complete.[12] That is to say, in Aquinas's theology the sacrament of the Eucharist is perfect before it is received by the faithful. More so than the inordinate amount of text devoted to the metaphysics of transubstantiation, this "completion before use" is symptomatic of the fundamental shift in which the fact that Christ is present in the consecrated host becomes more important than why he is present. In other words, this shift leaves us preoccupied with a presence understood as a "being" and not as a "being-for." Or, in Aquinas's own words:

> The difference between the Eucharist and other sacraments having sensible matter is that whereas the Eucharist contains something which is sacred absolutely, namely, Christ's own body; the baptismal water contains something which is sacred in relation to something else, namely, the sanctifying power: and the same holds good of chrism and such like.[13]

Aquinas is careful to distinguish the eucharistic presence from other sacramental presence. For Aquinas, presence is "real" regardless of its destination.

Before briefly touching on how Chauvet believes eucharistic presence should be understood, I must mention the two problems he sees as resulting from the deadly dichotomy. Here, it will be beneficial to quote Chauvet at length.

> In speaking of the "full realization" (*perfectio*) of the Eucharist in the consecration of the matter, inasmuch as the latter contains "in an absolute manner" the *esse* of Christ, one runs the risk of

[11] S.T. III.73.1.ad3. See also III.80.12.ad2.

[12] Cf. S.T. III.77.1. Here we see that Aquinas invokes divine providence twice to describe the eucharistic change: first, to change the substance of the species into the substance of Christ (i.e., to cause the *sacramentum et res*) and, second, to sustain the accidental dimensive quantity of the bread and wine (i.e., to maintain the *sacramentum tantum*).

[13] S.T. III.73.1.ad3.

> minimizing two capital elements that are linked together. On the one hand, one does not take into account the human destination that is implied by the *materia* in question, the bread and the wine. On the other, one loses sight of a fundamental aspect of the mystery: the Christ of the Eucharist is the *Christus totus*; the "head" cannot be isolated from the "body," the Church which still remains completely distinct from it.[14]

Both of these "capital elements" are concerned with the *purpose* of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. In other words, Chauvet is concerned with what he sees as a presence that is meaningful strictly as presence and not as presence *for the Church*. When Aquinas says that the sacrament is completed by consecration, he removes the reason for the consecration from the sacrament. This is especially evident when he makes it clear that the only words necessary for consecration are "This is my body" and "This is the chalice of my blood."[15] The whole narrative of the eucharistic prayer in which the reason for Christ's presence is expressed becomes unnecessary. What is important is that the bread and wine are now truly the body and blood of Christ. Eucharistic presence has become a question of being (*esse*) as opposed to being-for (*adesse*).

According to Chauvet, sacramental presence (especially eucharistic presence) should be understood as a "being-for." The word "presence" denotes not simply existence but relation. In describing Aquinas's theory of eucharistic change, Chauvet points out that "[presence] is isolated then as a thing in itself, and is being thought in the sole register of 'substance.' In this way, the '*ad-*' implied by the notion itself of presence (*ad-esse*) is put in parentheses to the profit of the sole substantial *esse*."[16] This bracketing of the "*ad-*" is a glaring symptom of the deadly dichotomy. To be present is to be present *to something or someone*. Being-for someone puts the focus primarily on the "someone" for whom you are present, in turn defining your own being in terms of that relationship. Something's presence is meaningful only insofar as it is in relation. Or, in Chauvet's words:

[14] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 388.
[15] Cf. S.T. III.78.1c.
[16] Chauvet, "Broken Bread," 250.

> The relational "for" is constitutive of the presence of Christ as such. This "for" is not a simple accidental and secondary derivation of it, nor a simple extrinsic finality. This point is of course capital: the eucharistic *esse* is intrinsically an *adesse*. Consequently one can never put this *ad* between parentheses, not even during the analysis of the how of the presence.[17]

When Aquinas distinguishes the Eucharist from the other sacraments in that it is completed after consecration, he has put the "*ad-*" in parentheses, leaving an *esse* without intention—a reality without purpose. Of course, this is not to deny that existence is a necessary aspect of presence but to insist that without the relationality of presence existence is meaningless. To illustrate the point with hyperbole: that Christ came down from heaven is insignificant; that Christ came for the salvation of the world is full of meaning. So, without those for whom Christ becomes present, the eucharistic presence of Christ is literally insignificant.

When presence is understood as a "being-for," it becomes impossible to claim that the Eucharist reaches its completion without being used by the Church. To make the ecclesial body of Christ extrinsic to the Eucharist is to rob the sacrament of its meaning. It is like an unwrapped gift. Or, to use the language of Chauvet, to remove the "being-for" from the eucharistic presence is a symptom of our "necrotic tendency" (*processus de nécrose*) to try (in vain) to capture and isolate the Living Christ.[18] That is to say: without an intrinsic relationship between the eucharistic body and the ecclesial body the eucharistic body is lifeless.

To conclude this section, we return to its title. The critiques we have just rehearsed can be summarized as lamentations of the loss of a loss. In other words, the deadly dichotomy can be seen as the result of an obsession with possession. Eucharistic theologies that

[17] Ibid., 255. This last phrase, "not even during the analysis of the how of the presence," betrays a misunderstanding at the root of so much critique of Aquinas's eucharistic theology. In our post-enlightenment obsession with reductive analysis of mechanisms, it becomes commonplace to expect foundational sacramental theology to be carried out through an explanation of the mechanism by which sacraments work. Hence, the fact that the foundational sacramental theology of signification is not materially grounding the explanation of eucharistic change is cause for concern to anyone who expects such a discussion.

[18] Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 174.

focus on the substantial presence of Christ in the eucharistic species strive to overcome the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is no longer here. When we succumb to our necrotic tendency to capture the flesh of Christ on our altars, reveling in the knowledge that he is no longer absent, we have lost the blessing of his distance which is our call to be his Church. That is to say, we have lost sight of who we are as Church: the ecclesial body of Christ. When Christ's presence is allowed to be an *esse* that we use as a sacred distraction from our secular lives, we lose the *adesse* that (according to Chauvet) is given as a task to foment our spiritual lives and build the Church that is the presence of the ascended Christ. To make transubstantiation the foundation and heart of eucharistic theology is to surrender the loss on which Christianity stands. To forget that Christ is gone is to forget that we are Christ.

Chauvet shows that Aquinas's preoccupation with the grammar of substance can result in some problematic ways of describing the Eucharist. As I will now argue, however, a careful reading of the sacramental theology in the *Tertia Pars* leaves us with questions that turn us toward the *Secunda Pars*. The depth of Aquinas's sacramental theology cannot be accurately appreciated without broadening our gaze beyond the text of the *Tertia Pars*.

## II. The Purpose of the *Summa Theologiae*

While Aquinas began to write the *Summa Theologiae* in Rome in the year 1265, I would argue, with Leonard E. Boyle, that the *Summa* finds its roots in Aquinas's previous experience as lector for his religious community in Orvieto.[19] From 1261 to 1265, Aquinas was charged with instructing his fellow Dominicans, readying them for their primary roles as preachers and confessors. The theological texts available to them, however, focused narrowly on practical theology, often disconnecting it from its dogmatic foundation. These well-established texts, such as Raymond of Pennafort's *Summa de Casibus*,

[19] Leonard E. Boyle, "The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas—Revisited," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephan J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 7. "[The *Summa Theologiae*] may have been begun at Santa Sabina in Rome where the *incipientes* were young students of the order, but it was Orvieto and [Thomas's] four years of practical teaching there among the *fratres communes* that had really occasioned it."

were held in high regard by Aquinas and remained a regular source for his own work. However, when given the opportunity to create a curriculum and oversee his own school in Rome (Santa Sabina), Aquinas seems to have shifted his pedagogy. Rather than maintaining the curriculum so prevalent in other Dominican schools, Aquinas was able to focus more on the relationship between dogmatic theology and ethics. As Boyle puts it, "By concentrating on God, Creation, Trinity, and other *dogmatic* or *systematic* areas of theology, he makes it clear that he was breaking away from the customary practical theology of the order."[20] Hence, when he set out to make his own contribution to the body of theological textbooks, he sought to structure the *Summa* in a way that would make the necessary relationship between dogmatic and moral theology explicit.[21] In short, Aquinas "attempted to set the regular training in practical theology in the Dominican Order on a more truly theological course."[22] By developing a dogmatic foundation for his students, Aquinas was emphasizing the intrinsic connection between ethics (i.e., questions regarding the moral quality of the human action) and systematic theology (i.e., questions regarding the dogmatically proclaimed Christian faith). Through the very structure of the *Summa*, Aquinas attests to the fact that "to study human action is . . . to study the Image of God and to operate on a theological plane. To study human action on a theological plane is to study its relation to its beginning and end, and the bridge between, Christ and the sacraments."[23]

While the *Summa* is vast in its breadth, it is a whole unified by its structure. Hence, isolating any part, question, or article of the *Summa* runs the great risk of misinterpretation. By moving to the *Secunda Pars* and examining it as the context of the *Tertia Pars*, I seek to mitigate the risk of such misinterpretation. Methodologically speaking, the role of the present chapter is to extract from the *Tertia Pars* a skeletal framework that we will enflesh in subsequent chapters, using the meat of the *Secunda Pars*. By briefly examining Aquinas's explicit

[20] Ibid., 6.

[21] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 118–20, 144–45.

[22] Boyle, "The Setting of the *Summa*," 7.

[23] Ibid.

treatment of the sacraments, I will highlight some questions that result from such an examination. These questions will be our skeletal framework. As we will see, these questions are not fully answered in the *Tertia Pars.* This lack is the justification of turning to the *Secunda Pars*.[24]

From the outset I wish to emphasize the reason that I am deliberately starting with the sacraments and not with Christology. According to Bernhard Blankenhorn, "Thomas' sacramentology must always be read through his Christology."[25] Admittedly, within the structure of the *Tertia Pars* the relationship between Christ's passion and the sacraments is paramount on both a methodological level and a conceptual level. At the methodological level, beginning with Christology (as the *Tertia Pars* does) determines the grammar within which the examination of the sacraments will occur. Hence, at the conceptual level, the *Tertia Pars* largely defines the sacraments in christological and soteriological terms. However, I am intentionally choosing not to begin with Christology, because Aquinas does not begin with Christology. The *Secunda Pars* comes before the *Tertia Pars*.[26] I do not want us to forget that Aquinas's treatment of Christ and the sacraments is preceded by an ethical context apart from which the *Tertia Pars* cannot be properly understood.

## III. Signification and Causality

According to Aquinas, the sacraments are necessary for salvation because by them we are incorporated into Christ, forming one unified

[24] It should be noted that this chapter runs the risk of repeating the methodological mistake I am critiquing. I too am starting with the *Tertia Pars*. However, this chapter is not seeking to set up a foundational hermeneutic to be employed in our examination of the *Secunda Pars*. Rather, the questions we will excavate from the *Tertia Pars* in this chapter serve as skeletal framework insofar as they indicate the prior presence of a framework to be found in the *Prima Pars* and *Secunda Pars*. Simply put, highlighting these questions functions to point out that Aquinas is assuming knowledge not present in the *Tertia Pars*.

[25] Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Place of Romans 6 in Aquinas's Doctrine of Sacramental Causality: A Balance of History and Metaphysics," in *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life*, ed. Matthew Levering and Reinhard Hütter (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

[26] Admittedly, it is also true that the *Prima Pars* comes before the *Secunda Pars*. The relationship between these two will be discussed in the following chapter.

body of his members.[27] Aquinas uses two categories to describe the way the sacraments accomplish this goal: signification and causality. As signs, the sacraments function to make humankind holy by leading us to knowledge of God. Causally speaking, sacraments exist to cause our participation in the life of grace. We turn first to an examination of sacramental signification as it is treated in question 60 of the *Tertia Pars*.

Throughout the opening question of the treatise on the sacraments, signification is discussed in terms of knowledge. "Signs are given to men, to whom it is proper to discover the unknown by means of the known."[28] More specifically, Aquinas tells us that signs are called sacraments when they signify a hidden sanctity.[29] There is, however, an important distinction to be made. Sacramental signification implies sanctification. "Properly speaking, a sacrament, as considered by us now, is defined as being the sign of a holy thing so far as it makes men holy."[30] By the sacraments we do not merely know that which is holy; we are made holy by that knowledge.[31] Sanctification is not the result of a special type of signification but rather the result of that which is signified.[32] In article 3, Aquinas tells us that the sacraments signify Christ's passion (the cause of our sanctification), grace and virtues (the form of our sanctification), and eternal life (the end of our sanctification).[33] Sacraments are said to have sacramental signification because they signify (i.e., offer us knowledge of) the cause, form, and end of our sanctification. In short, we are sanctified through knowledge of the causes of our sanctification.[34]

[27] Cf. S.T. III.61.1sc.

[28] S.T. III.60.2c. See also, a. 4.

[29] S.T. III.60.1c.

[30] S.T. III.60.2c.

[31] It is crucial to note that we are not saying anything yet about what "knowledge" means. Much less have we established how Aquinas understands the relationship between knowledge and sanctification.

[32] S.T. III.60.2.ad1.

[33] S.T. III.60.3c.

[34] According to Aquinas (cf. III.49.1.ad4 and III.61.1.ad3), as a "universal cause," Christ's Passion is "applied" to individuals through the sacraments. There is an implicit, yet acute awareness of the historical nature of salvation at work in Aquinas's thought here. The historical application of the passion will be taken up later in chap. 5.2.

It is the central role of signification that leads Aquinas to place such a high importance on the words used in the sacraments. I will have cause in subsequent chapters to return to the role of language in Aquinas's system. For now, I am content to point out that, according to Aquinas, words are signs *par excellence*, capable of signification in a way that objects and gestures are not.[35] There is an "essential sense" communicated by the words of the sacraments.[36] It is this essential sense of the words, and not the uttered words themselves, that makes sacramental signification possible. The sacramental signification is said to sanctify insofar as the essential sense of the words is believed through faith. So, I can qualify my previous claim: we are sanctified through belief in the causes of our sanctification—causes that are made present and known to us through the sacraments.[37]

With this notion of sacramental signification in mind, we can begin to understand what Aquinas means by sacramental causality. In question 62, Aquinas treats the issue of sacramental causality within the context of examining grace as the principal effect of sacraments. Aquinas points out that any instance of being incorporated to Christ is the result of grace.[38] Insofar as the sacraments are ordained to such an end, Aquinas feels that he is required to say (*necesse est dicere*) that the sacraments may be said to cause grace in some way (*per aliquem modum*). In article 1, he goes on to explain this inherited language by first saying what sacramental causality is not. Sacraments are not principal efficient causes; rather, they are always (even when Christ is substantially contained in the sacrament) separated instrumental efficient causes of grace. "The instrumental cause works not by the power of its form but only by the motion whereby it is moved by the principal agent: so that the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal agent."[39] Aquinas uses the relationship between carpenter, axe, and couch as a metaphor for understanding the distinction between principal cause and instrumental cause. This metaphor functions to highlight the fact that the effect (i.e., the couch) shares a likeness to the principal cause (i.e., the carpenter's mind)

[35] S.T. III.60.6c.
[36] S.T. III.60.8c.
[37] Cf. S.T. III.60.7.ad1.
[38] S.T. III.62.1c.
[39] Ibid.

and not the likeness of the instrumental cause (i.e., the axe). Before using the instrumental cause, the carpenter has in her mind an image of what she wants to create. The resultant couch shares a likeness to the thoughts of the carpenter (assuming the carpenter is not incompetent) but it does not share a likeness to the axe.

The principal effect of the sacraments is grace, and grace "is nothing else than a participated likeness of the Divine Nature."[40] Without unpacking what is positively meant by "a participated likeness in the Divine Nature" (a task that will be given much treatment in the following chapter), here we are concerned only with saying that grace shares a likeness, not to the sacraments, but to God. So, according to Aquinas, the sacraments cause grace the same way that an axe causes a couch. Likewise, the sacraments contain grace the same way that an axe contains a couch.[41] If we are to give a Thomistic answer to the question "What causes grace?" we must first point out that the question is flawed. The proper question is, "*Who* causes grace?" After answering that more fundamental question, we are then free to inquire about the ways God has deemed it fitting to cause grace.

As we have seen, Aquinas spends most of his time qualifying the traditional claim that sacraments cause grace. God uses sacramental signs to draw us into a participation in the Divine Nature. Put differently, God uses sacraments to cause grace. To contextualize Aquinas's incredibly nuanced exposition of sacramental causality, it is helpful to recall the *Summa*'s genre. It is an introductory textbook. Much like any good teacher of beginners, Aquinas is presenting the tradition as fairly as possible. Aquinas must tell his students that sacraments cause grace, so he tells them that sacraments have no causal power by nature of their form (i.e., the misunderstanding that allows *ex opere operato* to degenerate into hermeticism), but rather they are said to have causal power insofar as by means of signification God causes us to participate in the Divine Nature. Notice what Aquinas has done here: he has taken traditional grammars of causality and constructed a sacramental theology that aligns easily with a grammar of signification and participation. By defining grace in terms of participation he situates any understanding of sacramental causality within that framework.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Cf. S.T. III.62.3.

Understanding the relationship between causality and signification is important so as to avoid misunderstanding the role of the sacraments in the sanctification of humankind. The sacraments are not shower handles that, when properly turned, cause grace to shower down upon us from on high. Rather, the sacraments all function together to bring us to faithful participation in the Divine Nature. The enumeration of the sacraments, in Aquinas's treatment, results from the varying roles each religious ritual plays in the sanctification of humankind. That is to say, each sacrament helps us live the graced life in its own specific manner according to our various needs. All seven sacraments of the New Law serve the unity of Christ's body, the Church, by signifying our sanctification in different ways. When we say that the sacraments cause grace, we must avoid imagining seven different rituals causing the same homogenous grace in seven different ways. Rather, it is crucial to remember that each sacrament has its own *res tantum*, its own grace. Remembering that causality is a function of signification, we must look to the way the sacraments bring us to belief in our sanctification. Each sacrament sanctifies by virtue of its distinct form of signification. So, rather than shower handles, sacraments are like a series of letters you receive from a distant loved one, each treating a different aspect of your relationship. In reading a letter that expresses forgiveness after having hurt your beloved, you are drawn more deeply into that relationship with a renewed sense of friendship. A love letter that poetically celebrates a shared desire for one another intensifies the love that was already present. Similarly, sacraments signify God's actions in our lives. They cause grace by bringing us into that divine life.

Any examination of the *Tertia Pars* alone, like the one above, should leave the examiner with questions about the grammar Aquinas employs. As we have seen, through signification the sacraments bring us to belief in the source of our sanctification and, in so doing, we are made to participate in the Divine Nature. Put simply, through the sacraments, we are graced. Based on this discussion of sacramental signification, we have seen that the concepts of grace, participation, and belief are essential to Thomas's treatment of the sacraments. If we want to fully understand the sacraments we must first understand the relationship between grace, participation, and belief. Based on the exposition above, it should be clear that the sacramental theology found in the *Tertia Pars* does not sufficiently develop these terms and

their relationship to one another. This is because the *Tertia Pars* is assuming knowledge. In the following chapter, then, we will focus on the relationship between grace, participation, and belief as it is treated in the *Secunda Pars*. Together these terms make up the heart of the grammar of grace that this book is seeking to retrieve from the *Secunda Pars*.

## IV. Baptism and Penance: Infusing Charity

Before we move to an examination of individual sacraments, we must briefly treat Thomas's categories of "sacrament only, sacrament and reality, and reality only" (*sacramentum tantum*, *sacramentum et res*, and *res tantum*, respectively). Each sacrament can be described using these categories. Understanding the relationship between them helps us better understand the relationship between sacramental signification and grace. Simply put, the grace of a sacrament is the reality at which it aims, or its end. Thomas calls this end the *res tantum*. For example, as we will discuss further in the following section of this chapter, the purpose and *res tantum* of the Eucharist is the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ.[42] In the first article of question 73, Aquinas points out that the grace bestowed by the Eucharist is this *res tantum*.[43] Hence, eucharistic grace is identified with the unity of the Church. While each sacrament is ordained toward an end (i.e., its grace), the *sacramentum tantum* and the *sacramentum et res* of each sacrament play the vital role of signifying the sacrament's end. As I have already pointed out, grace is the result of sacramental signification. The *sacramentum tantum* and the *sacramentum et res* sanctify us by signifying the causes of our sanctification so that we might believe in that sanctification. In the Eucharist, the bread and wine (the *sacramentum tantum*) and the eucharistic body of Christ (the *sacramentum et res*) signify the Church's identity with Christ. It is important to note that, according to Aquinas, the *sacramentum tantum* and the *sacramentum et res* work *together* to cause the *res tantum* through signification.[44] This is very different from saying that the *sacramentum tantum* causes the *sacramentum et res*, which in turn causes the *res tantum*. This point is of particular importance for a proper understanding of the Eucharist.

[42] S.T. III.73.3c.
[43] S.T. III.73.1.ad3.
[44] S.T. III.84.1.ad3.

The unity of the Church is not the result of the substantial presence of Christ. It is a result of both the ritual itself and the substantial presence of Christ. In every sacrament, the *sacramentum tantum* and the *sacramentum et res* work together to sanctify us insofar as they are both signs that point beyond themselves to a particular manner of participation in Divine Life, that is, a sacramental grace. Aquinas's use of these three categories allows us to see, again, the foundational role of signification in his sacramental theology. All sacraments are ordered toward a *res tantum*, a particular grace. For Aquinas, it is by virtue of these graces that the sacraments are rightly enumerated as seven individual sacraments.

Having focused on how the sacraments are the same, the remainder of the chapter will focus on what makes the Eucharist different from the sacraments of baptism and penance. As I mentioned above, the Eucharist is ordered to nourishing the unity of the Church. While it is the main focus of this book to examine exactly how the Eucharist attains this end, the present chapter is concerned with offering a simple explanation: *the Eucharist increases charity in subjects*. By way of substantiating that claim, I would like to say what the Eucharist is not. Before I return to an examination of what it means to say that the Eucharist nourishes unity by increasing charity, I will begin by drawing the distinction between increasing charity and infusing charity. Remembering that the sacraments are distinguished by their ends, I will look at the ends of baptism and penance. By examining the relationship between charity and these two sacraments, I will highlight what the Eucharist does not do, namely, infuse charity.

In question 66, article 1, Aquinas points out that inward justification is the *res tantum* of baptism. The water and its use are the *sacramentum tantum*, and the baptismal character is the *sacramentum et res*. Together, the ritual and the baptismal character both signify the justification of the person who is baptized. Expanding on this particular grace of baptism, Aquinas cites John of Damascus who "also set down two things pertaining to the ultimate reality of the sacrament—namely, regeneration which refers to the fact that man by being baptized begins the new life of righteousness; and enlightenment, which refers especially to faith, by which man receives spiritual life."[45] So,

[45] S.T. III.66.1.ad1.

when Aquinas says that the very nature of baptism is "a regeneration unto a spiritual life" he is defining the *res tantum* of baptism.[46]

The grace of baptism is regeneration so that the baptized person "may be incorporated in Christ."[47] The relationship between justification and incorporation in Christ will be more closely treated in chapter 3. For now, I want to emphasize that justification is our spiritual regeneration into the life of Christ because through the forgiveness of sins we are "born again in Christ."[48] There is a radical newness to this spiritual life that leads Aquinas to call the sacramental grace of baptism "the grace of newness."[49] Through baptism, we are said to be justified insofar as we receive "a certain rectitude of order in [our] interior dispositions."[50] This ordered interior is accomplished through the infusion of the theological virtues.[51] The *res tantum* of baptism, then, is God's reordering of our dispositions by the infusion of faith, hope, and charity. All this is to say that the sacrament of baptism *infuses* charity where there previously was no charity.

Once we have charity, we can lose it completely and in an instant. Aquinas notes that the character received in baptism is indelible, but the justification we receive can be lost.[52] Through mortal sin, the presence of charity in the subject is destroyed.[53] To remedy such loss, we then need the re-infusion of charity that accompanies penance. For Aquinas, it is clear that through mortal sin we do not lose our other virtues; in a state of mortal sin we can still act justly, we can still have faith, and we can still be prudent. We do lose the form of those virtues, however, and therefore the possibility that they are meritorious. The theological virtue of charity forms all the virtues making them "strictly true" virtues. For instance, faith that is not formed by charity is lifeless faith. Lifeless faith is still a theological virtue, but its fruit is servile fear (i.e., the fear of punishment) as opposed to the fruit of living faith, filial fear (i.e., the fear of separation

[46] S.T. III.66.3c.
[47] S.T. III.68.1c.
[48] S.T. III.84.5c.
[49] S.T. III.69.8c.
[50] S.T. I.II.113.1c.
[51] S.T. I.II.113.4.ad1.
[52] S.T. III.66.1.ad1.
[53] S.T. II.II.24.12c.

from God).[54] When forming virtues, charity unites its end with the end of the formed virtue. Charity's end is the unity of deeper friendship with God.[55] While the end of justice is to give each person his or her due, when formed by charity, the end of justice is to give each person his or her due for the sake of friendship with God. Formed by charity, all virtuous ends become means to friendship with God.

The formal relationship between charity and the other virtues is destroyed by mortal sin. This disordered state is the occasion for the sacrament of penance.[56] Without going into excess discussion of penance, I want to highlight its similarity to baptism in that penance is the result of God's action in us whereby we are re-infused with charity. Aquinas distinguishes between internal and external penance.[57] Internal penance is a virtue whereby we deplore the sins we have committed. External penance consists of the external acts of religion necessary for the sacrament of penance. Together, internal and external penance make up the sacrament of penance. According to Aquinas, internal penance is the *sacramentum et res* of the sacrament of penance, without which the forgiveness of sins (i.e., the *res tantum*) is not achieved.[58] This necessary internal penance requires charity because "the act of the virtue of penance is directed against sin, through the love of God."[59] In the absence of charity that results from mortal sin, the sinner cannot come to true penance. True penance that is formed by charity is only had through re-infusion "by God immediately without our operating as principal agents."[60] This infusion of charity where there previously was no charity leads Aquinas to say that the sacrament of penance "belongs to the state of beginners, of those, to wit, who are making a fresh start from the state of sin."[61] Like baptism, penance is a sacrament of new beginnings in the life of charity.

[54] S.T. II.II.7.1c.

[55] S.T. II.II.23.1c.

[56] S.T. III.84.2.ad3. In the following discussion of penance I am referring to penance as remedy for mortal sin. To be sure, the sacrament of penance can be a remedy for venial sin, but it "was instituted chiefly for the blotting out of mortal sin."

[57] S.T. III.84.8.

[58] S.T. III.84.1.ad3.

[59] S.T. III.85.6c.

[60] S.T. III.85.5c.

[61] S.T. III.84.8.ad2.

In Aquinas's treatment of baptism and penance, we see that infusion of the theological virtues is the beginning of our spiritual life. Taken on its own, this discussion of baptism and penance leaves us with questions about the relationship between grace, the theological virtues, and justification. Again, Aquinas is using a grammar that is not sufficiently contextualized by the *Tertia Pars*. To fully understand the sacraments, we need to understand how we come to be subjects of the theological virtues and the effects those virtues have in our lives. The answers to these questions are not found in the *Tertia Pars*. Hence, we will need to turn to the *Secunda Pars*'s treatment of the relationship between grace and the theological virtues. This relationship will be the focus of chapter 3.

## V. The Eucharist: Increasing Charity

Earlier, I said that my main goal in this chapter is to define the Eucharist as a sacrament that is meant to increase charity. To help enflesh this definition, I am juxtaposing the inaugural character of infusing charity with the active and dynamic character of increasing charity. At the beginning of the previous section, I pointed out that, according to Aquinas, the Eucharist exists to nurture the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ. We can say this because such unity is the *res tantum* of the Eucharist. Just as the purpose of baptism is the justification of the baptized, so the purpose of the Eucharist is the unity of the Church.

In question 79, article 1, of the *Tertia Pars*, Aquinas discusses the effects of the Eucharist. Pointing out that "the spiritual life is the effect of grace," Aquinas says that we can be assured that the Eucharist bestows grace because the Eucharist is ordained toward the nourishment of the spiritual life.[62] Throughout this article, Aquinas repeatedly speaks of the effects of the Eucharist in terms of "life," using the synonymous terms "spiritual life" and "graced life." In considering the relationship between the Eucharist and the spiritual life, Aquinas offers four perspectives from which we might consider the way in which the Eucharist effects its *res tantum*, the unity of the Church.

First, just as the Word became incarnate so that the world might have life, so Christ becomes present in the Eucharist so that we might

[62] S.T. III.79.1sc.

have spiritual life. In Aquinas's words: "By coming sacramentally into man, [Jesus] causes the life of grace." Second, as a sign of Christ's passion, the Eucharist represents the forgiveness of sins that is offered in the Paschal Mystery.[63] Third, because Christ is given as food, the Eucharist "does for the spiritual life all that material food does for the bodily life, namely by sustaining, giving increase, restoring, and giving delight."[64] Finally, in the bread and wine we are given a sign of the Eucharist's effect because they represent unity. Both bread and wine are composed of many grains/grapes that are formed into one bread/wine.[65] These four perspectives function as possible ways to understand the relationship between the Eucharist and its *res tantum*. It would be a mistake to view this exposition as a dissection of the sacrament whereby Aquinas has isolated aspects of the Eucharist and named each part's corresponding result, effectively reducing the Eucharist to a sum of its parts while simultaneously reducing its effect to a sum of these effects. Rather than reduction, we ought to see this article as a meditation on the Eucharist, a meditation that moves from one perspective to another, offering different ways of articulating the Eucharist's relationship to the unity of the Church. From each perspective, Aquinas is discussing the relationship between the Eucharist and its *res tantum*.

In this article, Aquinas is unpacking the significance (strictly speaking) of the Eucharist and its parts. To better illustrate what he is doing in this article, it is helpful to think of the Eucharist as a sentence. Each word in a sentence is an individual sign. Each word signifies something beyond itself. The word "tree," when heard or read, will instantly signify something in the mind of the hearer or reader. When we use multiple signs, however, they affect one another's signification by mutual contextualization. For example, the significance of the word "tree" is altered via contextualization when it is preceded by the word "family." Likewise, the significance of the word "family" is affected in being followed by the word "tree." On their own, words have meaning due only to the context we project on them. But when

[63] Aquinas's understanding of Christ's sacrifice and its connection to the Eucharist will be treated in chap. 5. At this point, I wish to simply point out that Aquinas is not equating the Eucharist with baptism or penance.

[64] S.T. III.79.1c.

[65] Ibid.

words accompany one another they provide each other with context that dictates their significance. The words are no longer subject solely to the arbitrary projections of the hearer's desired context. Although made up of two individual signs, together they are a single sign, irreducible to its parts. Similarly, a sentence is a still more complex yet irreducible sign.

Consider the following sentence: "Studying my family tree makes me feel blessed by the past and responsible for the future." This sentence is a single sign. It communicates a single idea, even while being composed of a number of irreducible signs (e.g., words, phrases, modified nouns, etc.). Carrying this thought process further, a particular sacramental celebration (e.g., the 9:00 a.m. Mass on June 30, 2013, at St. Ignatius parish in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts) is like a sentence. On its own, bread can signify just about anything. When contextualized by an institution narrative (an irreducible sign), bread (another irreducible sign) takes on a particular significance. Made up of many individual signs, the Eucharist is a composite yet irreducible sign with a single *res tantum*: the unity of the ecclesial body. In question 79, article 1, Aquinas is considering various irreducible signs that together make up the irreducible sign of the Eucharist. He is, however, considering them in light of the single *res tantum* of the Eucharist. The effects he enumerates are all descriptions of the single *res tantum* of the Eucharist. This article points out that the spiritual life of the Church and its development are the concrete manifestation of the Church's unity.

In the fifth chapter, I will return to this article in order to examine the link between Christ's sacramental presence, Christ's sacrifice, and the Eucharist's *res tantum*. Before I can adequately carry out that examination, however, it is necessary to understand what Aquinas means when he refers to the spiritual life. When he speaks of the effects of the Eucharist in terms of "life" he is not speaking of an abstract concept. Rather, his use of the term "life" refers to a concrete and historical reality. The body may be mystical, but its unity is not. The unity of the mystical body of Christ is the unity of a Church that lives the spiritual life in its members. The degree to which the mystical body of Christ lives out its spiritual life is the degree to which it is united.

There is an assumption undergirding Aquinas's discussion of the nurturing nature of the Eucharist. Namely, in describing ecclesial

unity in terms of the spiritual life, Aquinas is assuming the presence of charity. As I noted in the previous section, the infusion of charity is the beginning of the spiritual life. Hence, any effect brought about by the Eucharist assumes the presence of charity in the subject. The textual proof that Aquinas thinks of the Eucharist not as a moment of infusion but rather as a celebration of preexistent charity can be found when he points out that union with Christ is a consequence of charity. In article 5 of question 79 Aquinas is discussing whether the punishment due to sin is forgiven by receiving the Eucharist.

> Through the power of the sacrament it produces directly that effect for which it was instituted. Now it was instituted not for satisfaction, but for nourishing spiritually through union between Christ and his members, as nourishment is united with the person nourished. But because this union is the effect of charity, from the fervor of which man obtains forgiveness, not only of guilt but also of punishment, hence it is that as a consequence, and by concomitance with the chief effect, man obtains forgiveness of the punishment, not indeed of the entire punishment, but according to the measure of his devotion and fervor.[66]

Union with Christ is an effect of charity. The union with Christ offered in the Eucharist is not a matter of metabolizing a divine substance. Nor is any individual's union with Christ (much less the mere presence of Christ) the purpose of the Eucharist. Christ's presence is a means to the union which is a means to increasing the unity of the mystical body of Christ. All this is to emphasize the fact that the Eucharist needs preexistent charity. Aquinas puts it bluntly in article 7 of question 79:

> As Christ's Passion benefits all, for the forgiveness of sin and the attaining of grace and glory, whereas it produces no effect except in those who are united with Christ's Passion through faith and charity, so likewise this sacrifice [i.e., the Eucharist], which is the memorial of our Lord's Passion, has no effect except in those who are united with this sacrament through faith and charity.[67]

[66] S.T. III.79.5c.
[67] S.T. III.79.7.ad2.

While Aquinas presupposes preexistent charity, he also sees fit to redefine the Eucharist's *res tantum* in terms of charity. In article 4 of question 79 he states that "the reality of [the Eucharist] is charity, not only as to its habit, but also as to its act, which is kindled [*excitatur*] in this sacrament."[68] When Aquinas says that the reality of the sacrament is the habit and act of charity, he is saying that an increase in the unity of the ecclesial body, insofar as it is the *res tantum* of the Eucharist, is synonymous with an increase in the presence of the community's *active* charity. The Eucharist begins with charity by which the individual is united to Christ. This sacramental union is meant to increase charity and its acts in the subject. When such an increase of charity and its acts occurs throughout a community, the unity of that ecclesial body of Christ is said to have been nourished and increased. The theological virtue of charity is both the source and summit of the Eucharist. It is both prerequisite and purpose. Hence, the Eucharist is a moment not of infusion but of increase.

While baptism and penance effect justification insofar as they infuse the theological virtues, the Eucharist effects sanctification insofar as it increases charity in the subject. In other words, the Eucharist deepens the spiritual life of the Church. The unity of the ecclesial body of Christ, the grace toward which the Eucharist aims, is an increase in the formally active presence of charity in that communal body. This treatment of the Eucharist leaves us with questions about what it means for a subject to increase in charity and how, practically speaking, that increase relates to the unity of the mystical body of Christ. The purpose of the fourth chapter will be to examine the relationship between increasing in charity and deepening one's spiritual life.

Unlike the infusion of theological virtues accomplished through the sacraments of baptism and penance, increasing in active charity necessarily involves human action. By distinguishing between the individual's union with Christ and the unity of the ecclesial body, Aquinas has made (what today we might call) the horizontal aspect of the spiritual life an essential aspect of eucharistic grace. The unity of the Church cannot be reduced to multiple and simultaneous unions with Christ. For example, my right hand and my left hand are not

[68] S.T. III.79.4c.

part of my body simply because they are each united to my head. Rather, they belong to one body because by virtue of their union to my head they are then able to work together according to their nature. The unity of my body does indeed depend on the union between my parts and my head, but the unity of my body cannot be reduced to the sum of those unions. The Church is not a body by virtue of each Christian's connection to Christ alone; rather, it is a body by virtue of the formal effect those unions have on the body's ability to function as one. The spiritual life is not a state of having charity; the spiritual life is actions that are formed by charity. Simply put, *my* union *with* Christ is inseparable from and ordered toward the *community's* unity *as* Christ. It is this necessary horizontal aspect of the ecclesial body's unity that gives rise to what will be the focus of our fourth chapter. Having spent the second and third chapters examining the relationship between grace and the theological virtue of charity, the fourth chapter will examine the role of the moral virtues in this relationship. Put differently, the fourth chapter will seek to understand what role human action plays in the spiritual life.

## VI. Unanswered Questions

Too often, readers of Aquinas pick up a copy of the *Summa Theologiae*, begin reading, and assume they know the meaning of the words they are reading. We fail to recognize that words are always contextualized by their grammars. We see words that are readily recognizable to us (e.g., "grace," "cause," and "participation"), and we are too quick to interpret them based on a modern grammar we anachronistically project onto them. The work of the present chapter has been to convince the reader that language being used in the *Tertia Pars* is part of a grammar that has its foundations constructed in the *Secunda Pars*. The unanswered questions I have listed throughout this chapter, then, are the result of a lack in context.

In light of Aquinas's discussion of sacramental signification and causality, we were left with questions about the relationship between grace, belief, and participation. In the next chapter, I will retrieve the grammar of grace that Aquinas constructs primarily in the *Prima Secundae*. This grammar will give us the context to answer questions about the relationship between grace, belief, and participation. In light of Aquinas's treatment of the infusion of theological virtues in

baptism and penance, we were left with questions about the relationship between grace, the theological virtues, and salvation. Likewise, in light of the treatment of the Eucharist as increasing charity, we were left with the question, how does the Eucharist increase charity? Turning to the *Secunda Secundae*, I will retrieve the grammars of virtue that allow us to contextualize and properly answer these questions. Finally, building on the examinations of grace and charity in chapters 2 and 3, the fourth chapter will look closely at how the moral and intellectual virtues aid our increase in charity. We will see that the grammars of grace and virtue that contextualize Aquinas's treatment of the Eucharist necessarily include these moral virtues. In short, the next three chapters of this project are essentially the retrieval of grammars that will contextualize our inquiry into the relationship between the Eucharist and its *res tantum*. Without the context of the *Secunda Pars*, we simply cannot comprehend the *Tertia Pars*.

These grammars of grace and virtue will make it clear that, contrary to the claims of Chauvet, Aquinas has not removed the Church from his eucharistic theology. On the contrary; the spiritual life of the Church is the context without which Aquinas's eucharistic theology cannot be understood.