

**The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist: A *Strange Neglect* of the
Resurrection?**

Research Masters in Theology

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Abstract

The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist: A *Strange Neglect* of the Resurrection?

Eminent theologians, Gerald O'Collins, Anthony J. Kelly and Luis M. Bermejo claim that a *strange neglect* of Jesus' resurrection persists in contemporary theologies of the Eucharist. All three suggest that this deficiency emerges from, and is most evident in, theologies of the Eucharist which are shaped by the insights of classical Christology. This thesis will demonstrate that the narrowness and rigidity of such Christology with regard to the Eucharist, finds its clearest expression in the neo-scholastic manualist tradition. To show how traditional theologians failed to engage with Jesus' resurrection Joseph Pohle's dogmatic treatise on the Eucharist first published in 1917, is presented herein. However, while such traditional discourse on the Eucharist prevailed in the seminaries in the early twentieth century, a clear shift soon began to emerge, whereby sacramental theologians on mainland Europe broke away from the narrow approach of neo-scholastic reflection by rediscovering the centrality of the Paschal Mystery to theologies of the Eucharist. This thesis suggests that the break with the neo-scholastic manualist tradition and its treatment of the Eucharist, finds its origins in the writings of the Benedictine liturgist, Dom Odo Casel, whose treatise on the mystery of Christian Worship was published in 1932.

After being refined and modified by Louis Bouyer in his dynamic theology of the Word of God and Edward Schillebeeckx in his treatise on sacramental encounter, the acceptance of the insights raised by Casel in his mystical theology reached its climax in the liturgical renewal of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). However, with the Council's revitalised appreciation of the Paschal Mystery, one must ask whether the claim of O'Collins, Kelly and Bermejo is justly founded or whether it holds weight only in respect of the manualist tradition. From this standpoint, the theologies of Jean-Luc Marion, Louis-Marie Chauvet and Herbert McCabe with regard to the Eucharist are observed in order to establish whether an appreciation of the resurrection has flourished in post-conciliar theologies or whether its neglect has persisted. By examining these theologians' reflection on the Eucharist, it becomes apparent that an obvious neglect of the resurrection has unquestionably persisted, especially with regard to the transformative dimension of the Eucharist.

This thesis argues that by engaging in a more comprehensive manner with Jesus' resurrection, in particular, the appearance narratives, the dynamic of our encounters with the risen Christ in the Eucharistic celebration is enriched. The appearance narratives present a well-spring of symbolic language which enables us to better understand humankind's revelatory encounters with the glorified, transfigured Christ now in His-Spirit filled existence. Thus, by engaging with Jesus' resurrection in this more comprehensive manner, the response of those in the Gospel narratives – the disciples who experienced the risen Christ – this thesis brings the dynamism of the entire Eucharistic action to the fore.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work set out in this MA by Research in Theology is my own work and has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, by me or any other person, for the purpose of obtaining any other grade or academic reward.

I also agree that this MA in Theology may be made available by Mary Immaculate College at the University of Limerick to future students.

Signed: _____

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Date: 27th August, 2015

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Declaration	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Chapter One	1
Introduction	1
1.1. Purpose of this Work.....	1
1.2. Outline and Plan.....	3
Chapter Two	7
A Strange Neglect of Jesus’ Rising from the Dead in Contemporary Theologies of the Eucharist	7
2.1. Introduction.....	7
2.2. Gerald O’Collins, S.J.	7
2.3. Anthony J. Kelly	18
2.4. Luis M. Bermejo, S.J.	24
2.5. An Emerging Consensus.....	29
2.6. The Manualist Tradition: An Exemplar of Resurrection Neglect.....	30
2.7. Brief Synopsis.....	35
Chapter Three	37
An Emerging Perspective: A Retrieval of the Paschal Mystery	37
3.1. Introduction.....	37
3.2. Breaking with the Rigidity of Neo-Scholastic Theologies of the Eucharist	38
3.2.1. <i>Dom Odo Casel, O.S.B.</i>	38
3.2.2. <i>The Fullness of Time</i>	45
3.2.3. <i>The Christian Mysterium</i>	48
3.2.4. <i>The Eucharist: A ‘Wiedergegenwärtigung’ of the Paschal Mystery</i>	50
3.3. An Emerging Acceptance of Mystery.....	56
3.3.1. <i>Mystici Corporis Christi (1943)</i>	56
3.3.2. <i>The Eucharist as the Climax of our Mystical Union with the Risen Christ</i>	60
3.3.3. <i>A Brief Synopsis</i>	65
3.3.4. <i>Mediator Dei (1947)</i>	67
3.3.5. <i>The Eucharist as the Commemorative Sacrifice of Christ’s Death</i>	70

3.3.6.	<i>The Beginning rather than the End</i>	75
3.4.	Refining and Modifying Casel’s Mystical Theology	78
3.4.1	<i>Louis Bouyer</i>	78
3.4.2.	<i>Edward Schillebeeckx</i>	91
3.5.	The Second Vatican Council and the Official Acceptance of Mystery	100
3.5.1.	<i>The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum concilium) (1963)</i>	100
3.5.2.	<i>The Paschal Mystery and the Nature of the Liturgy</i>	101
3.5.3.	<i>The Eucharist and the Paschal Mystery</i>	106
3.5.4.	<i>Christ’s Presence in the Liturgy by His Word</i>	108
3.6.	Conclusion	110
Chapter Four		112
Has an Appreciation of the Resurrection Flourished in Post-Conciliar Theologies of the Eucharist?		112
4.1.	Introduction.....	112
4.2.	Understanding Presence in a ‘Postmodern’ Context.....	112
4.2.1.	<i>Heidegger’s Critique of Western Metaphysics</i>	112
4.2.1.1.	<i>Being and Time</i>	113
4.2.1.2.	<i>Temporality and Dasein</i>	116
4.2.1.3.	<i>The Call of Being</i>	121
4.2.1.4.	<i>Poetic Thinking</i>	125
4.2.1.5.	<i>Heidegger and Nonfoundationalism</i>	128
4.2.2.	<i>A Theological Reading of the Critique of Onto-Theology</i>	130
4.3.	Jean-Luc Marion	133
4.3.1.	<i>God without Being</i>	133
4.3.2.	<i>The Withdrawal and Giving of the Christian God</i>	139
4.3.3.	<i>Marion’s Theology of Eucharistic Presence</i>	147
4.4.	Louis-Marie Chauvet	160
4.4.1.	<i>Overcoming the Notion of Causality with Symbolic Mediation</i>	160
4.4.2.	<i>Language as Symbolic Exchange and the Sanctuary of Being</i>	168
4.4.3.	<i>A Presence of Absence: An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation</i>	172
4.5.	Brief Synopsis	176
4.6.	Herbert McCabe.....	178
4.6.1.	<i>The Eucharist as the Creative Language of God and the Gift</i>	178
4.6.2.	<i>The Meaning of Change</i>	179

4.6.3.	<i>The Resurrection and Language: A Rewriting of Transubstantiation</i>	183
4.7.	Conclusion	188
Chapter Five	.....	190
Reading the Narratives of the Resurrection Appearances	.....	190
5.1.	Introduction.....	190
5.2.	N.T. Wright’s Approach to the Resurrection	190
5.2.1.	<i>Easter and History: The Resurrection as Revelatory-Event</i>	190
5.2.2.	<i>The Resurrection Narratives: Redemption and Transformation</i>	194
5.2.3.	<i>The Unique Event: Burning Hearts and Broken Bread</i>	196
5.3.	Luke Timothy Johnson and the Post-Resurrection Experiences	198
5.3.1.	<i>The Appearance Narratives as Accounts of Continuing Religious Experiences</i>	198
5.3.2.	<i>Shared Meals: the Communal Dimension of Encounters with the Risen Christ</i>	205
5.3.3.	<i>The Holy Spirit as the Symbol of Encounter with the Risen Christ</i>	207
5.4.	Sandra Schneiders and the Johannine Resurrection Narratives	211
5.5.1.	<i>Seeing and Believing in the Transfigured Christ</i>	211
5.5.2.	<i>Encountering the Risen Christ: Contemplation and Mission</i>	216
5.6.	Conclusion	223
Chapter Six	.....	226
Conclusion	.....	226
6.1.	The Continuation of the Mystery Revealed in Christ	226
6.2.	The Resurrection as the Dynamism of the Eucharistic Celebration.....	242
6.3.	Addressing the Deficiency in Theologies of the Eucharist	247
Bibliography	.....	258
Appendix	.....	285

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Purpose of this Work

Attention will be given in this thesis to the claim referred to by Gerald O'Collins S. J. and Anthony J. Kelly as the *strange neglect* of the resurrection in sacramental theology. This statement is directed, particularly by O'Collins, at those writing in the area of Eucharistic theology. Both writers have argued that theologians of the Eucharist fail to place the resurrection of Jesus at the centre of their theology, a claim also supported in the writings of the prominent theologian Luis M. Bermejo. When speaking of the memorial dimension of the Eucharist, Bermejo emphasises that "the entirety of the Paschal Mystery embraces both death and resurrection in an unbreakable unity, and it would be a deplorable distortion of the redemption to overstress one-sidedly the aspect of death to the neglect of his glorification."¹ However, Bermejo also argues that many contemporary theologians still fail to let Jesus' resurrection shape their theologies of the Eucharist.

Excluding the resurrection of Christ, or keeping it on the periphery of a consideration of the Eucharistic celebration, impoverishes the mystery being proclaimed and celebrated. O'Collins makes the point that the faithful do not gather together as a community to celebrate the Eucharist to proclaim the birth of Jesus. Rather, they come together as the mystical body to proclaim our Easter faith.² In John's Gospel, the intimate relationship between our Easter

¹ Luis Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 2 ed. (India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1989), 41.

² Gerald O'Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 4. See also; Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 40-43.

faith and the Eucharist is eloquently expressed: “[A]nyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise that person up on the last day” (Jn 6:54). However, theologians, in their treatise on the Eucharist, have tended to focus primarily on the salvific effect of the Cross, and its relationship to the Eucharistic mystery. Such theology concerns itself with only one aspect of the Easter reality. This line of systematic thought has fallen short of what is required when one attempts to explain the way in which we encounter the risen Christ in the Eucharistic celebration. It is only when theologians of the Eucharist allow their theology to be shaped by the whole Paschal Mystery that the indispensable relationship between Jesus’ resurrection and our contemporary experience of Him in His Spirit-filled existence can be uncovered.

By bringing the appeal of O’Collins, Kelly and Bermejo to the fore, this thesis attempts to enrich theological discourse on the Eucharistic celebration by returning to those initial encounters between the disciples and the risen Jesus after His death. The rich symbolic language contained in the Easter narratives helps one understand more clearly not only His real presence in the Eucharist, but also other dimensions of our communal celebration. For far too long, theologians of the Eucharist have approached the Eucharistic reality with stark focus on the *fact* of His real presence in the elements of bread and wine, much to the impoverishment of the Eucharist in its other vital dimensions. While the risen Christ’s presence in the sacred species is integral to the Eucharistic mystery, it is but one aspect of this many-faceted reality and it would appear that Eucharistic themes such as table fellowship, transformation, mission, proclamation and memorial have fallen by the wayside in theologies of Eucharist in favour of the single theme of the real presence in the Eucharistic species.

When theologians recognise that the resurrection of Jesus is the locus for discourse on the Eucharistic reality, a more profound analysis can be given of the spiritual richness contained therein. The potential of a more comprehensive approach to Jesus’ resurrection for the further

development of contemporary theologians understanding of the presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist initially came to this authors' attention from a reading of *Holy Thursday: Deepening Our Appreciation for Eucharist*,³ an essay written by the theologian and academic, Dr. Eugene Duffy. From this standpoint, this thesis attempts to enrich theologies of the Eucharist by returning to those initial Easter encounters between the risen Christ and His disciples. This thesis will argue that the dynamism of the entire Eucharistic action finds its source and its centre in the mystery of the glorified Christ. The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to demonstrate that by engaging with the Easter narratives it becomes apparent that there is far more to our dynamic encounters with the risen Jesus in the Eucharist other than the fact of His real presence in the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine.

1.2. Outline and Plan

In order to address the imbalance in Eucharistic theology briefly outlined above, Chapter Two will closely examine the work of three prominent twenty-first century theologians in this area, namely, Gerald O'Collins, Anthony J. Kelly and Luis M. Bermejo. Here, the concerns raised by these writers in relation to contemporary theologians' poor engagement with Jesus' resurrection in their theologies of the Eucharist, will be discussed. Following consideration of the criticisms raised by these writers, Joseph Pohle's neo-scholastic 'Dogmatic Manual' published in 1917, will be analysed, thereby presenting an exemplar of early twentieth-century theologians' neglect of Jesus' resurrection. This discussion will demonstrate the failure by theologians to sufficiently engage with Jesus' resurrection in their theologies of the Eucharist.

Chapter Three will draw attention to twentieth century theologies of the Eucharist, especially theologians' break with neo-scholastic discourse and will show how this break is clearly

³ Eugene Duffy, "Holy Thursday: Deepening Our Appreciation for Eucharist," in *Celebrating the Triduum*, ed. Enda Lyons and Eugene Duffy (Dublin: Columba Press, 1999), 64-77.

illustrated in the mystical theology of Dom Odo Casel. After presenting Casel's retrieval of the Paschal Mystery, the gradual acceptance of mystery by those at official levels of the Church will be explored by engaging with the encyclical letters of Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi* and *Mediator Dei*. Following the analysis of the encyclicals, the modification and reformulation of Casel theological insights by theologians such as Louis Bouyer and Edward Schillebeeckx will be discussed and it will be seen that in their theologies, Casel's insights emerge in a richer and more coherent manner. The theological thoughts of Bouyer and Schillebeeckx came to exert significant influence on the liturgical reform inaugurated by John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council and on theologies of the Eucharist as seen in the Vatican II document, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. However, while theologies of the Eucharist were enriched by a revitalised appreciation of the Paschal Mystery post-Vatican II, theologians still failed to allow their theologies to be shaped in a richer way by Jesus' resurrection.

Chapter Four will analyse three post-Vatican II theologians: Jean-Luc Marion, Louis-Marie Chauvet and Herbert McCabe and show how they that utilise the insights of philosophy and theology to develop a richer understanding of the dynamics of presence and absence concerning humankind's encounters with the risen Christ present in the Eucharist. Both Marion and Chauvet argue that theologies of the Eucharist that developed from the insights of classical metaphysics, particularly with regard to the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, fail to give a satisfactory account of the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Such writers criticise scholastic theologians, namely, St Thomas Aquinas and his contemporaries, for their use and emphasis on the notion of causality in their theologies of the Eucharist. However, by observing the theology of Herbert McCabe it becomes clear that writers such as Chauvet have misinterpreted Aquinas and that caution should be exercised concerning Marion's and Chauvet's somewhat radical dismissal of an onto-theological approach regarding Christ's

presence in the Eucharist. Chapter Four will illustrate that while all three contemporary theologians, Marion, Chauvet and McCabe present significant insights concerning the dynamics of presence and absence with regard to one's encounters with the risen Christ in the Eucharist, they fail to allow the risen Jesus to shape their theology in a more profound and comprehensive manner.

Chapter Five will examine the insights of contemporary biblical theologians, namely, N.T. Wright, Luke Timothy Johnson and Sandra Schneiders, concerning the resurrection. It will show that these biblical scholars clearly argue that the disciples encounter the risen Christ in a new and unique manner in His state of resurrection. Particular attention will be given to the contexts and situations described in the Gospels. It will be argued that such contexts and situations provide significant insight into our understanding of the Eucharistic celebration, particularly the unique mode of existence distinctive to the risen Christ. By engaging with the resurrection narratives in a more comprehensive manner, it becomes clear that there is more to one's dynamic encounters with the risen Christ in the Eucharist than the *fact* of His real presence in the sacred species and the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharistic celebration. It will be shown that the dynamic of the entire Eucharistic action finds its source and centre in the risen Christ and that the understanding of contemporary theologians is enriched by allowing His resurrection to shape a reflection on the Eucharistic action of the Church in a more meaningful way.

In Chapter Six, the perceptions and insights raised in previous discussions will be synthesised. This chapter will show that five specific dimensions emerge from a consideration of Jesus' resurrection and these five aspects represent significant features of Jesus' public ministry and that of the early Christian community. By bringing the significance of these five aspects to bear on our understanding of the Eucharist, the entire Eucharistic action of the Church can be understood more fully as the continuation of the mystery

revealed in Christ. Hence, it becomes clear that an understanding of our experience of the risen Christ's personal living presence in the Eucharist is deeply enriched when the dynamic of the whole Eucharistic action is shaped by a more comprehensive consideration of Jesus' resurrection.

Chapter Two

A Strange Neglect of Jesus' Rising from the Dead in Contemporary Theologies of the Eucharist

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter the concerns raised by theologians, namely, Gerald O'Collins, Anthony J. Kelly and Luis M. Bermejo in relation to the neglect of the resurrection in theologians' treatises on the Eucharist will be addressed. It will be observed that each of these writers argues that theologians' failure to engage with the resurrection emerges from the influence of classical Christology. After outlining the claims of O'Collins, Kelly and Bermejo an exemplar of resurrection neglect will be analysed in order to demonstrate the way in which theologians have failed to engage sufficiently with Jesus' resurrection in their treatises on the Eucharist. For this analysis the neo-scholastic dogmatic manual of Joseph Pohle will be used as an exemplar. From our discussion in this chapter it becomes clear that there has been a significant neglect of Jesus' resurrection in theologies of the Eucharist. Hence, let us begin our discussion by engaging with Gerald O'Collins critique.

2.2. Gerald O'Collins, S.J.

In his recent book *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*,⁴ Gerald O'Collins suggests that theologians should recognise that the resurrection is the focal point and source of Christian life and theology. Placing further emphasises on this point, he proposes that the resurrection of Jesus is an inexhaustible source of meaning that can enrich and revitalise systematic thought on the sacraments.⁵ O'Collins suggests that the resurrection can be "seriously neglected by those who write in the area of sacramental

⁴ Gerald O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2012).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

theology.”⁶ He proposes that both prior to and after the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), theologians have failed to let the resurrection shape their theologies of the Eucharistic celebration. He emphasises that if a treatise on the sacraments fails to be concrete in its reference to the resurrection, it must be recognised that it will inevitably fall short of what is required to articulate and appreciate the extraordinary richness of the Eucharistic mystery.⁷ He insists that both the resurrection and the Eucharist “illuminate each other,”⁸ and that any approach to the sacraments which moves away from the Easter mystery should be resisted.

O’Collins draws attention to Bernard Leeming’s *Principles of Sacramental Theology*⁹ and proposes that his treatise illustrates a theology of the sacraments which neglects Jesus’ resurrection.¹⁰ While this classic text was hugely influential in the years leading up to Vatican II, it scarcely mentions the resurrection. Amidst the 750 pages of his treatise on the sacraments, Jesus’ resurrection is referenced on just 8 pages and all are embodied in his critical evaluation of Dom Odo Casel’s ‘mysteries-presence’ theory.¹¹ O’Collins suggests that such a neglect of Jesus’ resurrection emerged from the influence of classical Christology on sacramental theology. He proposes that such theology failed to communicate the importance of the risen Christ in the context of the sacraments.

O’Collins notes that discourse on the sacraments was shaped by the classical Christology of St Thomas Aquinas. He proposes that the limitations of classical reflection on Jesus Christ can be drawn together under six headings:

it is (1) a Christology ‘from above’, which (2) remains incarnation-centred, (3) runs into philosophical problems, (4) mixes together historical, theological and mythical language, (5)

⁶ O’Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 158-66.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁹ Bernard Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology* (Maryland: The Newman Press, 1960).

¹⁰ O’Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 154.

¹¹ Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 305-13.

bypasses the ministry of Jesus, and (6) separates the person of Jesus Christ from his work, that is to say, separates Christology from soteriology or the doctrine of salvation.¹²

(1) Christology from above

Classical Christology begins from above, and thereby the form assumed by its initial question can be articulated as follows: how does God become man? How does the pre-existent Son of God enter our world? For instance, ‘he descended from heaven’ serves as the starting point for the classical Christology of Aquinas, Karl Barth and many other theologians. O’Collins suggests that such an approach casts doubt on Jesus’ genuine human existence. It forces the question: does Jesus simply play at being human?¹³ Such an approach implicitly implies that: although the figure in the manger may cry like any baby, grow to adulthood like any other child living in Nazareth, preach in a style of a wandering rabbi, and suffer a horrific death that we refer to as the Crucifixion, we are still aware at one and the same time, that He is truly God. Put simply, Jesus is divine underneath and His genuine humanity therefore becomes suspect.¹⁴ Thus, O’Collins highlights an inherent danger in classical Christology, namely, that it can be distorted and eventually become a doxocentric position.

¹² O’Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith*, 1.

¹³ Ibid. O’Collins states that further difficulty surrounding the initial question (how does God become man?) emerges from the answer suggested by the Greek fathers with regard to a related question ‘why does God become man?’ The Greek fathers proposed that God became man in order that man might become God. Understanding the possibility of emulating and sharing in the divine nature was perhaps not as difficult to comprehend in the early centuries of the Christian era. O’Collins expresses, however, that it is not merely the ‘felt’ absence of God that renders this old theme less plausible. Rather, humankind is aware that the human person is dehumanised in various ways. Therefore, humankind must feel humanised before even beginning to imagine becoming divinised. O’Collins makes this point clear when he writes that humankind “has to be incarnated before he can bear to talk about the incarnation of a divine person.”

¹⁴ O’Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith*, 2.

(2) *Incarnation-centred*

O'Collins draws attention to another major stumbling block posed by classical Christology, namely, that it perceives "the incarnation to be the central doctrine about Jesus Christ."¹⁵ Rather than starting from the Easter events, classical reflection on Jesus Christ starts from the incarnation. Such an approach views the events that followed the incarnation as being merely the unfolding of all that had previously taken place in the incarnation itself. From this point of view, the resurrection and the incarnation are perceived as of equal importance when attempting to understand Jesus Christ.¹⁶ Therefore, classical Christological reflection on Jesus Christ was blinded by the mystery of the incarnation, to such an extent, that it failed to recognise the Easter events as an inexhaustible source of meaning and value for systematic reflection on Jesus Christ and the sacramental life of the Church. O'Collins states that the approach followed by classical Christology "involves an unworkable, as well as unbiblical plan of attack"¹⁷ when wrestling with the mystery of Jesus. The words of Walter Kasper accentuate this point:

If we allow that the divine-human person of Jesus is constituted once and for all through the incarnation, then the history and fate of Jesus – above all his cross and resurrection – have no more constitutive meaning. The death of Jesus is then merely the completion of the incarnation. The resurrection is no more than the confirmation of the divine nature.¹⁸

However, this does not mean that the doctrine of the incarnation should be abandoned. Rather, the point being made merely draws attention to fact that the biblical story suggests

¹⁵ O'Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith*, 3.

¹⁶ Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 7-9.

¹⁷ O'Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith*, 5.

¹⁸ Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans. V. Green (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 37; *Jesus Der Christus* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1974), 44.

that the starting point for systematic thought on Jesus Christ should be the Easter mystery. This is clear when the sacramental theology of St Paul is taken into account. For instance, St. Paul makes clear that the Paschal Mystery is the source and centre for any discourse on Jesus and the sacramental life of the Church. Speaking about baptism he writes, “so by our baptism into His death we were buried with Him, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father’s glorious power, we too should begin living a new life” (Rom 6:4). Yet, classical Christology persisted in its focus upon what Christ did at the beginning rather than on what He did at the end. O’Collins suggests that this approach has resulted in many “tortured and frustrated attempts to relate Christ’s humanity and divinity within one personal existence.”¹⁹ This point draws attention now to the third major problem with adopting the approach of classical Christology.

(3) Philosophical Problems

The point of departure of classical Christology grew from the Chalcedon confession. O’Collins proposes that it thereby commits itself to infinite engagement with the questions: “what terms – be they strictly or only loosely philosophical – should we use to relate in a true unity the being human and the being divine in Christ? How do we state a double reality of ‘true God and true man’, so that one aspect does not prevail at the expense of the other?”²⁰ Such an avenue into Christology presents from the outset a series of unavoidable problems that inhibits the development of a fuller understanding of the mystery of Jesus. O’Collins suggests that the traditional line of thought that theologians have taken when faced with such problems can be summarised as follows: (a) the being human and the being divine co-exist in a dubious unity, and (b) a credible humanity gets edged out due to emphasis being placed on the divine nature. For modern theologians the latter has become the most common theological

¹⁹ O’Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith*, 6.

²⁰ Ibid.

trend.²¹ Although this trend developed from the Chalcedon creed, such a theological imbalance is in contradiction with Chalcedon itself for its confession insists on the oneness of Jesus' person. Chalcedon's confession of faith begins and ends with words about Jesus that stress in an almost literal sense that He is one.²²

Furthermore, O'Collins highlights that the philosophical terminology introduced by Chalcedon also presents significant theological difficulties. One such difficulty becomes clear in the context of the two-natures teaching. O'Collins notes that 'one person in two natures' can sound more like "a man with two jobs or someone with dual nationality."²³ Such language can obscure the important difference between being human and being divine. To be divine is something radically different to being human. He further suggests that while Chalcedon does not refer to Christ as a 'divine person', classical theology has interpreted the Chalcedon confession in that sense. Furthermore, O'Collins notes that 'nothing can be done' to conceal the real shift between classical and contemporary understandings of the concept of 'person'. The former spoke of a rational being that exists in its own right but it failed to articulate interpersonal relations "an individual substance of a rational nature (*naturae rationalis individua substantia*)"²⁴ The latter speaks of self-awareness, freedom, and intersubjectivity as vital aspects of personhood. With the insights of phenomenology it is clear that the human person only exists now in the plural, that is, we become persons through our relations with other persons, "sharing a common language and experiencing a common history."²⁵ Put simple, the meaning of the word 'person' has changed.²⁶

²¹ Erik Routley, *The Man for Others* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), ix.

²² O'Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith*, 6.

²³ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Piet Schoonenberg, "Is Jesus "Man Plus God"?", *Theology Digest* 23 (1975): 59-70. See also; *The Christ* (London: Sheed and Ward 1972).

(4) Historical, Theological, and Mythical language

The fourth issue highlighted by O'Collins is the ease with which traditional Christology accepts the mixture of history, faith and mythical imagery that is present in old creeds. He quotes the creeds' statements as follows: "Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven."²⁷ For O'Collins, such a simple listing together of these aspects can obscure the fact that "we are constantly shifting from one order to another."²⁸ Put simply, it is not immediately clear where ordinary history begins or ends. Similarly, Hans Küng draws our attention to the fact that it should not be presumed that Christ's birth and resurrection belong to the same order because of the manner in which the creed presents them.²⁹ In particular, Küng highlights the perspective of the oldest Christian witness, St Paul, as way of making clear that we are constantly moving betwixt and between the orders of reality.

Küng makes clear that the biblical testimony of St Paul does not focus on the virgin birth, the descent in to hell, nor the ascension. Rather, he notes that for Paul it is the resurrection that is taken with inexorable decisiveness as the centre of Christian preaching.³⁰ Put simply, the resurrection is an event of an order different from that of the birth of Jesus. Likewise, Jesus' death belongs to a different order than His rising from the dead. While His death and resurrection are inseparable within the Paschal Mystery which is singular, it is important that one understands that both belong to different orders of reality. If we are to understand the mystery of the glorified Jesus and the fullness of the Eucharistic celebration, it is significant

²⁷ O'Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith*, 7.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁹ Hans Küng, *Christ Sein* (Verlag: R. Piper & Co, 1974), 336. See also; *On Being a Christian*, trans. Edward Quinn (Great Britian: The Chaucer Press Ltd, 1980), 347.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

that this point is recognised. Both Jesus' birth and death are historical events that occurred within the realm of ordinary history. That is to say, both can be subjected to a full historical consideration and were thereby more amenable to classical systematic thought and its way of 'doing' theology. It could be argued, therefore, that perhaps this point is another limiting aspect of classical systematic reflection on the mystery of Jesus that has led to theologian's poor engagement with Jesus' rising from the dead.

(5) *Bypasses the ministry of Jesus*

The fifth problem surrounding the approach of traditional Christology is that it omits the earthly ministry of Christ. O'Collins notes that it leaps directly from Jesus' birth to His death and therefore fails to appreciate the significant aspects of Jesus' ministry. Although Aquinas does deal with the mysteries of Christ's life, it can be said that from a general perspective traditional Christology overlooked the significance of Jesus' ministry. In particular, O'Collins draws attention to the Christology of Wolfhart Pannenberg in *Jesus – God and Man*.³¹ He observes that Pannenberg gives attention neither to the miracles performed by Jesus nor the other significant aspects of His ministry. He notes that Pannenberg showed little interest in attempting to provide a 'personal profile' of Jesus. Christological approaches such as Pannenberg's in his *Jesus – God and Man* and Jürgen Moltmann's, in his *Theology of Hope*,³² fail to appreciate the importance of Jesus' earthly ministry. O'Collins says that the earthly ministry of Jesus was passed over in almost total silence.³³ The significance of this dimension of the mystery of Jesus should have been obvious to theologians and yet this was not the case.

³¹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus - God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1970).

³² Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

³³ O'Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith*, 10.

It is important to note that twentieth theologians such as Edward Schillebeeckx, Küng, Kasper and many others have provided thorough reflections on the historical Jesus. However, due to traditional Christology being shaped by the Chalcedonian confession, theologians such as Pannenberg and Moltmann bypassed the earthly ministry of Jesus by jumping from His birth to His death, a point which reaffirms O'Collins's view that traditional Christology presents an understanding of Jesus Christ that did not engage fully with the biblical testimony about Him.

(6) A Separation between Christology and Soteriology

Finally, the sixth aspect of traditional Christology that O'Collins brings to the fore is that theological discourse which developed from the Chalcedon confession managed to separate Christology from soteriology.³⁴ Although there was a deep concern for redemption behind Chalcedon's consideration of Christ's human and divine natures, its teaching still communicates Christ as "merely an object of knowledge."³⁵ Similarly, Piet Schoonenberg suggests that such a view detaches Christology from soteriology³⁶ in that it failed to consider the biblical aspirations for salvation. Such theological reflection on Jesus Christ "lapsed into a mass of abstract and cliché-burdened teachings about the divine-human constitution of Christ."³⁷ Furthermore, O'Collins draws attention to the fact that such theology failed to recognise the soteriological themes that lay behind the early Church's Christological statements. He claims that if we are to truly appreciate the mystery of Jesus and the sacramental life of the Church the intimate relationship between Christology and soteriology

³⁴ O'Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith*, 10.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁶ Schoonenberg, *The Christ*, 63. See also; "Is Jesus "Man Plus God"?", 59-70.

³⁷ O'Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus? A Report on Recent Speculation About Jesus Christ and Its Implications for Christian Faith*, 11.

must be retrieved. It must be acknowledged that separating one from the other impoverishes both our understanding of Jesus Christ and the redemptive process.³⁸

Although many sacramental theologians have shifted away from such classical Christology, O'Collins suggests that a neglect of Jesus' resurrection still persists. In particular, he notes that this is most evident in relation to our understanding of the risen Jesus. O'Collins states that theologians have not fully developed a Christology that is built around the communicative presence of the risen Jesus. In light of the Gospel of John, especially John 6, O'Collins emphasises that if an Easter Christology is to be fully developed it would have to include three important features, namely, the "symbolic, liturgical and experiential."³⁹ However, he notes that apart from the theology of Schillebeeckx,⁴⁰ James Mackey⁴¹ and Jon Sobrino⁴² many recent Christologies have been consistently non-experiential. He emphasises that the absence of these three aspects from traditional theology has led to limited considerations of the Eucharistic reality. He states that, "through being non-symbolic, non-experiential and non-liturgical many recent Christologies have not appreciated and furthered the communication of the risen Christ."⁴³ This then provokes O'Collins to highlight that contemporary Christologies have not provided a sufficient treatment of liturgical data.

What believers experience and know about the risen Jesus is primarily transmitted through forms of worship along with all the visual and musical art that accompanies it. O'Collins suggests that if theologians had taken notice of what their liturgy communicates then the

³⁸ Here, it could be suggested that such a perspective has the potentiality to slip into a kind of gnostic position. See Augustine O. S. B. Kerkvoorde, "From Other Lands: The Mystery of the Church According to Scheeben," *Orate Fratres* 17, no. 3 (1943): 141-51.

³⁹ Gerald O'Collins, *Jesus Risen: The Resurrection-What Actually Happened and What Does It Mean?* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1987), 206.

⁴⁰ Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ: The Christian Experience in the Modern World*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Seabury, 1980), 20-64.

⁴¹ James Mackey, *Jesus the Man and the Myth* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1994).

⁴² Jon Sobrino, *Christology at a Crossroads: A Latin American Approach*, 2 ed. (Texas: Orbis Books, 1978).

⁴³ O'Collins, *Jesus Risen: The Resurrection-What Actually Happened and What Does It Mean?*, 201.

much-disputed question of the centre and starting point of Christology would long ago have been solved. He discerns that when one is liturgically receptive it becomes clear that the Paschal Mystery should be the focal point and source of theological reflection on the mystery of Christ. He observes that the earliest Christian followers interpreted their experience of faith in light of Jesus' death and resurrection. Still, as has been made clear thus far, traditional theology has failed to approach the mystery of Jesus in this way. Today when celebrating the Mass the assembly does not proclaim "[I]ncarnating you destroyed death, preaching you restored our life."⁴⁴ Rather, it is our Easter faith that is proclaimed "Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free."⁴⁵ Although the birth and ministry of Jesus are of great importance, it is the Easter events that reveal themselves as the central aspects of our Eucharistic celebration. Therefore, for Christology to be meaningful it must align itself with liturgical experience in order to better communicate with believers their experience of the risen Jesus.

The difficulties presented by traditional systematic reflection on Jesus Christ are numerous and have had a significant impact on theological considerations of the Eucharistic celebration. Yet, it must be accepted that any sacramental theology must build on Christology because the source and centre of the Church's sacramental life is the risen Jesus. Here, O'Collins' main issue with theological discourse on the Eucharistic reality becomes clear. The approach taken by traditional theology to the sacraments centred on classical Christology. However, as highlighted by O'Collins, classical Christology fails to include Jesus' rising from the dead. Therefore, traditional theology of the Eucharist was impoverished as it developed from a Christology that was weak in its appreciation of the Easter Jesus. O'Collins draws attention to the work of Anthony J. Kelly, who has also argued

⁴⁴ O'Collins, *Jesus Risen: The Resurrection-What Actually Happened and What Does It Mean?*, 203.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

this point vigorously in his writings.⁴⁶ Like O'Collins, Kelly argues that contemporary systematic thought needs to retrieve its consciousness of the resurrection effect that saturates the Church in all of its vital dimensions.

2.3. Anthony J. Kelly

In his book *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought*,⁴⁷ Anthony J. Kelly claims that the resurrection permeates the entire phenomenon of the Church and consequently should transform the life and thought of all Christian believers. He brings together biblical, theological and philosophical thinking to demonstrate how Jesus' rising from the dead 'saturates' the whole of Christian faith. In particular, he suggests that the resurrection saturates the Church in its scripture, liturgy, sacraments and communal witness, as well as theology in its Christological, Trinitarian, ecclesial, sacramental and cosmic dimensions.⁴⁸ However, Kelly notes that the resurrection, central as it is to the whole Christian life and experience, "often, leaves theology tongue-tied."⁴⁹ Like O'Collins, he draws attention to the incarnational theology of Chalcedon and notes the absence of any reference to the resurrection.

Kelly claims that in the history of Christian doctrines especially from the third century on, the incarnation attracted the greater part of the Church's attention. He suggests that regardless of the fact that the incarnation is only appreciated as a mystery or encountered as a problem in light of the resurrection for both theology and doctrine, theology was far more concerned with the incarnation which was more "adaptable to systematic presentation than the

⁴⁶ O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 1-2. See also; "The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought," *Theological Studies* 70, no. 2 (2009): 478-80.

⁴⁷ Anthony J. Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought* (New York: Orbis Books, 2008).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-23.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 2. See also; the concluding words of Gerald O'Collins, "The Resurrection: The State of the Question," in *The Resurrection: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Resurrection of Jesus*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5-28.

resurrection.”⁵⁰ He claims that such emphasis on the incarnation emerged from perceiving “the word incarnate, God-with-us in Jesus of Nazareth” (Mt 1:23) as anchoring theology more concretely in the world of human experience rather than “Christ apart from us in the resurrection.”⁵¹ He states that the resurrection was an event of another order, but rarely was it made clear that the Word was made flesh “not only in being born, living, speaking and acting, suffering and dying as a human being, but also in His rising from the tomb.”⁵² He insists that the incarnation must extend to include Jesus’ rising from the dead, and be interpreted in that light.

Kelly argues that not only has Jesus’ resurrection been taken for granted in theologies of the Church in its sacraments, it has also been left to look after itself “amidst the more urgent doctrinal preoccupations of Church and its theology.”⁵³ He writes that “the resurrection sounds perhaps like a bass chord in the larger symphonic arrangement of theology, but never particularly intrusive.”⁵⁴ He emphasises that the Church’s mission would be starved of energy if it were to lose all sensibility of the resurrection effect that pervades its communal life and mission in all its dimensions.⁵⁵ However, this would only occur if the Church began to perceive itself as “the guardian of ethical values, the promoter of human dignity, and the defender of its own institutional freedoms.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, he draws attention to the fact that Karl Rahner has also highlighted this enduring deficiency. Rahner argues that theologians’ focus on the incarnation has led to an impoverished theology of resurrection.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought*, 2.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁷ Karl Rahner, “Dogmatic Questions on Easter,” in *Theological Investigations IV* (Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press, 1966), 121-133.

Kelly claims that the resurrection of Christ was heard only as an “apologetic confirmation of the Church, or the validity of hope in an afterlife.”⁵⁸ Rather than recognising it as a pervasive source of value and meaning, the success of apologetic claims in regard to the empty tomb and the appearances of the risen Jesus have led to the reduction and isolation of the resurrection as a probative fact. Kelly states that if the significance of the resurrection was not exhausted by its apologetic role, further consideration of it was moved to a later treatment – perhaps as “an addition to the incarnation to be treated as one of ‘the mysteries of Christ’.”⁵⁹ The status of the resurrection as the source from which the scriptures and the subsequent history of doctrine and theology derive was thereby obscured. He proposes that a contributing factor to such neglect has been the “taken-for-granted obviousness of faith in the resurrection.”⁶⁰ For him, it is the resurrection of Jesus that provides the broadest horizon within which the ultimate meaning of life, “how we should live, and what we can expect from the God who raised Jesus from the dead”⁶¹ can be recognised.

Kelly argues that theology perhaps sought its non-negotiable point in the mystery of the incarnation because it operates in servitude to cultural forms of philosophy.⁶² He claims that such theology presumes that it would possess a more anthropological character and would therefore be significantly more attuned to dialogue with philosophy, science and religion, if it held the resurrection in reserve. He suggests that the resurrection’s “eschatological excess might end in being a distraction from a more broadly based human conversation.”⁶³ However, he states that the situation is more complex than these initial provocative remarks suggest.⁶⁴ According to him, the awkward task posed by the resurrection for theology has led to it being

⁵⁸ Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought*, 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ O’Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 1-2.

⁶² Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought*, 6.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

reduced to an optional extra or a divine after-thought.⁶⁵ He claims that the awkwardness posed by the resurrection can be expressed as follows: if theology gives all its attention to the incarnation, the defining character of the resurrection is thereby too simply presumed.⁶⁶ Yet, if theology concentrates on the post-resurrected life in the Spirit unfolding in history, “the resurrection of Jesus himself is easily relegated to a mythological past.”⁶⁷ He suggests that this enduring neglect of the resurrection emerges from external considerations. In particular, he draws attention to the complex relationship between reason and the resurrection.⁶⁸

Kelly proposes that before a serious and well-grounded historical explanation of the resurrection can be given “it needs to be appreciated on its own terms – as the phenomenon that structured the whole life of faith.”⁶⁹ However, he suggests that theology seems to observe a “strange silence” concerning this matter.⁷⁰ He states that it is not only the women in Mark’s Gospel who “said nothing for they were afraid” (Mk 16:8) but thinkers in every age have maintained such a silence. Drawing on St Paul’s conviction concerning the resurrection (1 Cor 15:17), he perceives Jesus’ rising from the dead as the event that made all the difference. He emphasises that it is the risen Jesus that is the source of the Spirit; and, the transforming power of the Spirit is climactically manifested in the phenomenon of the resurrection.⁷¹ However, he identifies an enduring theological tendency to reduce the resurrection to an experience of the new gift of the Spirit.

⁶⁵ Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought*, 7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* Kelly discerns that one facet of the problem emerges around the precise meaning of ‘reason’ itself when considering the resurrection. He states that the resurrection calls into question the rationalistic metaphysic worldview that is anti-resurrectional by its nature. He argues, therefore, that if one is operating with reason akin to this worldview, that is to say, one that is anti-resurrectional by its nature, the resurrection then may appear irrational. It is the resurrection that is central to faiths’ perception of the saving action of God. Thus, it can be said that it is Jesus’ rising from the dead that evokes “from its very particularity, endless reflection on its universal significance.”

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

Kelly suggests that Western theology needs a refreshing theology of the Spirit. However, such a project would be destined to fall short if the gift of the Spirit is separated from the prior ‘given-ness’ of the resurrection event. He says that “the Spirit of new life animating believers has not left Jesus dead and buried.”⁷² Rather, “what happened to Christ overflows from Him into the lives of all believers, enabling them to share in the cosmic transformation that has been anticipated in His being raised from the tomb.”⁷³ For Kelly, it is only when this point is acknowledged that contemporary experience of the risen Jesus in the Eucharistic celebration can be more fully appreciated.

Kelly refers to sacramental theologians’ failure to engage with the resurrection as a *strange neglect*. He observes that although theologians in their treatises on the sacraments have made sophisticated connections with “the anthropology of ritual, symbols and signs, the resurrection effect can be oddly muted.”⁷⁴ In such works the resurrection is not acknowledged *as granted*, it is not appreciated as that which *is given* within the deepest dynamics of God’s self-giving love.⁷⁵ He draws attention to two treatises in particular within contemporary sacramental theology that have neglected Jesus’ resurrection, namely, David Powers’ *Sacrament: The Language of God Giving*,⁷⁶ and Kenan Osborne’s *Christian Sacraments in a*

⁷² Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought*, 4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 5. Here, it important to note three anthropologists whose work has contributed significantly to theologian’s revitalised understanding of the Church’s sacramental life, namely, Arnold Van Gennep, Victor Turner and Mircea Eliade. These scholars have drawn attention to the liminal dimension of the Church’s liturgical rites and have enhanced theologian’s appreciation of the symbolic dimension of reality when considering the sacraments. See namely, Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1909); Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago, Illinois: Adline Publishing Company, 1995); Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Illinois: Waveland Press Inc, 1963); *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (London: Hardcourt Inc, 1957).

⁷⁵ Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought*, 5.

⁷⁶ David Power, *Sacrament: The Language of God*, 1 ed. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998).

Post-Modern World: A Theology for the Third Millennium.⁷⁷ Kelly expresses his surprise in relation to the latter, as Osborne had given thorough consideration to the resurrection in a previous work.⁷⁸ For Kelly, each of these treatises merely demonstrates that “the resurrection is simply taken for granted.”⁷⁹ Here, it is important to note the work of Aidan Kavanagh since his theological reflection on the liturgy implicitly draws attention to transformative power of the resurrection. In his *On Liturgical Theology: The Hale Memorial Lectures of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 1981*,⁸⁰ Kavanagh proposes that theologians must become more receptive to the fact that liturgical experience is the locus for refreshing theological insight. Drawing on the words of Urban Holmes, Kavanagh suggests that good liturgy often leads to the edge of chaos. Kavanagh writes that:

...‘theology’ is not the first result of an assembly’s being brought by liturgical experience to the edge of chaos. Rather, it seems that what results in the instance from such an experience is deep change in the lives of those who participate in the liturgical act.⁸¹

Such theological reflection enables refreshing insights to grow when wrestling with the transformative power of the resurrection which permeates the Eucharistic celebration. However, while the theology of Kavanagh has made a significant contribution to liturgical theology, theologians in their considerations of the Eucharistic celebration still observe a strange silence surrounding the importance of the resurrection in relation to the Eucharist.

From this standpoint Kelly appeals to sacramental theologians to adopt a resurrectional attitude.⁸² Gerald O’Collins has also endorsed the appeal of Kelly. Both theologians have

⁷⁷ Kenan Osborne, *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World: A Theology for the Third Millennium* (Mahweh, NJ: Paulist, 1999).

⁷⁸ Osborne, *The Resurrection of Jesus: New Considerations for Its Theological Interpretation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997).

⁷⁹ Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought*, 5.

⁸⁰ Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology: The Hale Memorial Lectures of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 1981* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1992), 73-96.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

attempted to re-align Christian theology to the resurrection which is, or ought to be, the focal point and source of theological discourse on the Eucharist. Each has called on theologians to embrace a resurrectional attitude, and recognise the centrality of Easter faith to systematic thought. Luis M. Bermejo, a prominent theologian of the Eucharist, has also voiced his concerns in his writings concerning theologians' neglect of the resurrection in their considerations of the Eucharist celebration.

2.4. Luis M. Bermejo, S.J.

In his *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*,⁸³ Luis M. Bermejo notes that the common name attached to the Eucharist in the Catholic tradition prior to Vatican II was the sacrifice of the Mass. He suggests that this is not surprising as stressing the sacrificial character of the Eucharist was a “typical reflection of the mentality of the times.”⁸⁴ He proposes that such expressions reflect theologians' emphasis on the salvific effect of Calvary which led to the resurrection receiving little, if any, attention in considerations of the Eucharist. In the centuries that followed the Council of Trent (1545-63) theologians of the Eucharist were preoccupied by reflections on the Eucharistic conversion, that is, the change of the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.⁸⁵ He observes that, “for them Christ is present under the twin symbols of bread and wine and that is, for all practical purposes, the end of the Eucharist.”⁸⁶

The writings of Maurice de la Taille provide a clear example of this perspective. In his *The Mystery of Faith: The Sacrifice of the Church*,⁸⁷ de la Taille gives full attention to the

⁸² Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought*, 7.

⁸³ Luis Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 2 ed. (India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1989).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁸⁷ Maurice de la Taille, *The Sacrifice of the Church*, trans. Archpriest Joseph Carroll, III vols., vol. II, *The Mystery of Faith* (London: Sheed and Ward Ltd, 1950).

Eucharistic conversion and its sacrificial character. Placing the incarnation and Jesus' death on the Cross at the centre of his theology, he apprehends the Eucharist as the ecclesial sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. Such treatments of the Eucharistic mystery are blinded by the brilliance of Christ's real presence. Here, it is important to distinguish between the conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ and His real presence. These two doctrines should not be confused as both are not of equal significance and their relation with the core of Christian faith is also different. The Eucharistic presence of Christ is not affected directly by what happens to the bread during the celebration. Bermejo alludes to this point stating, "[O]ne thing is the real presence of Christ and quite another is the absence of bread."⁸⁸ This is a fundamental distinction for this study and will avert confusion in subsequent chapters. Nevertheless, limited perspectives such as that of de la Taille have led to a thorough neglect of the Eucharist in its other dimensions.⁸⁹

Drawing attention to such tendencies Bermejo further accentuates the situation by stressing that "the real presence is known and appreciated; the sacrificial dimension of the mystery is vaguely apprehended and respected; the memorial dimension is largely ignored."⁹⁰ For him, the Eucharist is the banquet of the sacrificial memorial and it would be to the impoverishment of the fullness and plenitude of the Eucharistic mystery to establish a hierarchy of truths among the memorial, sacrificial and banquet dimensions of the celebration "for all three are equally essential and none of them should be stressed at the expense of the other two."⁹¹ For Bermejo, the Eucharistic celebration is a multi-dimensional singular action.

In addition, by concentrating on the problem of the Eucharistic conversion de la Taille uses language that depicts the character of Jesus' real presence in the sacred species as the

⁸⁸ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 224.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

“perpetual Victim.”⁹² Such language fails to express fully that Christ is not a *suffering* victim who did not remain in the confines of death. Rather as a consequence of His resurrection and ascension, Jesus is the *glorified transfigured* victim alive now in a new way and His presence is not limited to the elements of bread and wine. Although speaking of the Eucharist as sacrifice is correct, it is also limiting for the sacrificial dimension expresses only one aspect of the Eucharistic mystery. Although our linguistic ability as human beings will never acquire the capability to express the complete Eucharistic reality, using language that fails to communicate the significance of Christ’s death and glorification to the Eucharistic mystery further diminishes and limits our understanding of the banquet of the memorial sacrifice.

Understanding the Eucharistic celebration as memorial emerged from a more biblical approach to the Eucharistic mystery. This theological approach is adopted by Bermejo. He states that “[T]he Mass is but an echo of Calvary and the Eucharistic liturgical action is the memorial or commemoration of Christ’s Paschal Mystery.”⁹³ Bermejo brings to light what the biblical sources have to say about the Eucharist and throughout his theology he allows his findings to shape his consideration of the Eucharistic celebration in all of its dimensions. By doing so, it becomes clear that it is only when the Eucharistic celebration is considered in all its essential aspects that one can recognise and appreciate the inexhaustible theological and spiritual richness contained in it. According to Bermejo, “it is not only the Eucharistic presence of Jesus that is firmly grasped and cherished as a veritable treasure, but the entire Paschal Mystery, centre and core of our redemption, that is sacramentally commemorated on the altar.”⁹⁴ Briefly stated, the sacrificial character of the Mass is empowered by the death and resurrection of Jesus as it constitutes, in an unbreakable unity, the salvific sacrifice *par*

⁹² Taille, *The Sacrifice of the Church*, II, 80.

⁹³ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 57.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, xiii.

excellence.⁹⁵ However, he highlights that a persisting theological tendency has been to associate Calvary exclusively with Jesus' death and not with His resurrection.

Understanding Calvary exclusively within its relationship with Christ's death is a distortion of the historical reality. While Calvary is undoubtedly where Jesus died, Bermejo emphasises that it is also where He rose. It can be said then, that Calvary was not only the privileged witness of Jesus' death but to "the entire salvific action."⁹⁶ He states that Calvary "should always be seen as being bathed in the soft glow of Easter"⁹⁷ not only in a historical context but also theologically. He emphasises that theologians in their considerations of the Eucharist must recognise this point if they are to engage with the Eucharistic reality in a fuller way. He argues that "[W]e have suffered for too long already from a narrow, unenlightened identification of redemption with death, with His resurrection tagged on as an unimportant appendage to the central mystery of the Cross."⁹⁸ He proposes that any approach that does not perceive Good Friday as a pointer to the radiance of Easter Sunday is a distortion of the biblical testimony. He makes clear that the salvation of humankind is dependent on both Jesus' death and resurrection as both are inseparable and equally indispensable in relation to human salvation. Hence, it is important that theologians in their treatise on the Eucharist place equal emphasis on both His death *and* resurrection, rather than stressing the significance of Jesus' death at the expense of His resurrection.

Bermejo states that "Christ's resurrection (and ascension, almost certainly fused with it as a distinct aspect of the mystery, but not as a distinct historical event in Jesus' life) belongs to the very essence of His sacrifice, which is perfected, not on Good Friday but on Easter

⁹⁵ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 57.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Sunday.”⁹⁹ The words of Francis Durrwell accentuate this point, “the resurrection is the conclusion without which the sacrifice is essentially mutilated and is therefore no sacrifice at all.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross cannot be understood as a sacrifice without including His resurrection. Jesus’ self-giving on the Cross would mean nothing without God’s acceptance of that being offered. In other words, God’s acceptance of Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross is revealed in the action of raising Jesus from the dead. This point must be acknowledged if we are to understand the indispensable relationship that exists between the Cross and the resurrection. From this standpoint it becomes clear that if it is accepted that Calvary must always be seen as being *bathed in the glow of Easter*, the entire salvific action of Easter should likewise envelop the altar.

It is the glorified transfigured Christ that is present in our midst in our Eucharistic celebration not the dead Christ.¹⁰¹ Bermejo insists that the Eucharist should not only mediate death but also exultation and glory. Still, he observes that when St Paul spoke of the Easter events Jesus’ death was understood as a sacrifice with inexorable decisiveness. For instance, Paul writes, “[T]hrow out the old yeast so that you can be the fresh dough, unleavened as you are. For our Passover has been sacrificed, that is Christ... (1 Cor 5:7).” And, again in his later writings he says to the Ephesians “[A]s God’s dear children, then, take him as your pattern, and follow Christ by loving as he loved you, giving himself up for us as an offering and a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God (Eph 5:2).” Hence, Bermejo states that Jesus’ death was one event that the early Church “did not hesitate to designate as sacrificial.”¹⁰² However, a sacrifice requires two very important aspects that constitute it as true sacrifice. In order for a sacrifice to be understood as being a true sacrifice it necessitates that something must be

⁹⁹ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 58.

¹⁰⁰ F. X. Durrwell, *The Resurrection: A Biblical Study*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward Ltd, 1960), 70.

¹⁰¹ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 59.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 60.

offered and that there is a subsequent acceptance or refusal of that which has been offered. Therefore, if Jesus' death is to be recognised as a true sacrifice then His death must be understood as His self-giving on to death and that God, by raising Him from the dead, revealed His acceptance of Jesus' self-offering on the Cross. Bermejo makes this quite clear when he writes that "the glorification of Jesus equals His acceptance by the Father."¹⁰³

For Bermejo, it is only when the Eucharist is understood in light of the unified salvific action witnessed by Calvary, Jesus' self-offering on the Cross and God's acceptance of Jesus in His glorification, that it can be understood as a banquet of the memorial sacrifice.¹⁰⁴ Thus, it can be said that Bermejo has made clear that theologians in their considerations of the Eucharist have fallen short of what is required to give a fuller treatment of the Eucharist. Theologians have placed emphasis on the death of Jesus and the salvific effect of the Cross at the expense of His resurrection. It is only when Jesus' resurrection is recognised as being central to any understanding of Calvary that one can begin to speak of His death as having any salvific effect for humankind. Therefore, any theology of the Eucharist which fails to be concrete in its reference to both Christ's death *and* resurrection impoverishes and further limits our understanding of the Eucharistic action of believers.

2.5. An Emerging Consensus

After observing the concerns raised by O'Collins, Kelly and Bermejo in relation to the neglect of Jesus' resurrection in theologies of the Eucharist, it can be discerned that it is only when the entire salvific action of Easter is more fully engaged with that systematic reflection

¹⁰³ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 63.

¹⁰⁴ Bermejo places further emphasis on this point by suggesting that given the intimate relationship which exists between Calvary and the Eucharist, it is clear that it is not only the former but also the latter which too bears the imprint of Easter. He proposes that any understanding of the Mass that exhibits an exclusive connection with the death of Jesus impoverishes not only how we comprehend his resurrection, but also how we understand the Eucharistic reality. Put simply, he proposes that theologians should place equal emphasis on both as each is an essential element of his total glorification which believers gather to commemorate at their Eucharistic celebrations. See also; Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 58-60.

on the Eucharist can be revitalised and enriched. Each writer has argued convincingly that the resurrection has been passed over by most theologians in almost total silence. Such theology has distorted the historical reality of Calvary by understanding it with almost exclusive focus on the Cross. By doing so, theologians have obscured the fact that the entire Easter mystery should be the focal point and locus for theological discourse on the Eucharistic celebration.

Furthermore, each of the writers discussed above have called on sacramental theologians to adopt a resurrectional attitude when approaching the Eucharist. Each of them has highlighted that the neglect of the resurrection stems from traditional systematic thought on the Eucharist which developed from classical Christology. As classical Christology was weak in its appreciation of the resurrection, any theological reflection that developed from it in relation to the Eucharist was also weak in its appreciation of Jesus' rising from the dead. This has been shown to be particularly evident in the theological presentations of the Eucharist that were expounded in neo-scholastic manuals of theology. The manualist tradition gave little, if any, attention to Jesus' rising from the dead. Consequently, such theologies of the Eucharist failed to develop a sufficient understanding of the relationship that exists between the memorial and the sacrificial action of offering and acceptance revealed to humankind in the Easter events. Therefore, it is important that an exemplar of such traditional theology of the Eucharist be examined. A typical author of the manualist tradition, Joseph Pohle, will serve as an exemplar.¹⁰⁵ By engaging with his discourse on the Eucharist it becomes clear that such theology failed to be receptive of the entire Easter mystery.

2.6. The Manualist Tradition: An Exemplar of Resurrection Neglect

The theology of the neo-scholastic tradition clearly illustrates the neglect of the resurrection that has been highlighted thus far. The synthesis of neo-scholastic theology is reflected in the

¹⁰⁵ Monsignor Joseph Pohle, *The Sacraments: A Dogmatic Treatise 'the Holy Eucharist'*, ed. Arthur Preuss, 2 ed., III vols., vol. II, Dogmatic Theology (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co, 1917).

pre-Vatican II dogmatic manualist tradition. Such dogmatic manuals were written in Latin and a set usually consisted of between one and twelve volumes. The manuals were used in seminaries as teaching text books for those preparing for the priesthood. Each manual set about defending the Catholic faith against the attacks of Protestantism and Enlightenment rationalism.¹⁰⁶ However, many systematic theologians such as Dom Odo Casel, Karl Rahner, Joseph Ratzinger and Edward Schillebeeckx have drawn attention to the limitations of neo-scholastic discourse.¹⁰⁷

The neo-scholastic tradition was utterly dependent on scholastic theology. From this dependency, the theological methodology of neo-scholasticism reflected a narrow and rigid approach when *doing* theology. It fell short of what was required of any theology that aims to give a rich consideration of not only the Eucharistic celebration, but of the Christian faith in all of its dimensions. The manuals emphasised the importance of Church doctrine and that once the doctrines of the Church were understood then one had access to the very essence of Catholic Christianity itself.¹⁰⁸ Likewise, the same approach was adopted in theological considerations of the Eucharistic celebration.

¹⁰⁶ Philip Cremin, "From Peritus to Pope: Benedict XVI and the Council," *Doctrine and Life* 62, no. 10 (2012): 27. See also; Monsignor G. Van Noort, *Dogmatic Theology: Christ's Church*, trans. John J. Castelot and William R. Murphy, vol. II (Cork: The Mercier Press Limited, 1958), xi-x. Within the translator's preface of Noort's *Christ Church* a significant criticism of the manuals is highlighted concerning the fact many theologians have stressed that the manual's fail to give sufficient attention to the insights of biblical scholarship. However, both Castelot and Murphy respond to this criticism. Both translators suggest that while this criticism has its merits, it too presents some methodological and pedagogical problems. According to Castelot and Murphy, the manuals would no longer be textbooks but encyclopaedias if a full biblical treatment of all the material presented was to be given within them. While their response to this point has its strengths, such a rebuttal does not account for the manuals weak appreciation of the biblical testimony about Jesus Christ and the insights distilled by biblical scholars. Furthermore, such issues can also be observed in Tanquerey's treatise on Ascetical and Mystical theology. Here, Tanquerey fails to be receptive of the Easter Jesus in his treatise. See in particular, Rev Adolphe Tanquerey, *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology*, trans. Rev Herman Branderis (Belgium: Society of St. John the Evangelist Desclée & Co, 1930), 39, 44-80.

¹⁰⁷ John F. Sweeney, "Current Theology: Some Recent Developments in Dogmatic Theology," *Theological Studies* 17, no. 3 (1956): 375.

¹⁰⁸ Sweeney, "Current Theology: Some Recent Developments in Dogmatic Theology," 375-77. See also: Cremin, "From Peritus to Pope: Benedict XVI and the Council," 4. A clear example of the manuals rigidity and narrowness can be seen in Van Noort's theological consideration of revelation in Monsignor G. Van Noort,

The manualist tradition also affected the laity's understanding of the Eucharist. As mentioned above, the manuals were used as a primary theological source in the education of the clergy. However, once the priest was ordained he went to his assigned parish and preached from the altar what he had been taught whilst in the seminary. Therefore, if the theological sources that the priest had engaged with were weak in their understanding of the Eucharistic celebration, what he then taught the faithful about the Eucharistic mystery was also impoverished. Hence, it can be seen that the impact that the manualist tradition had on the parish faithful in their understanding of the Eucharist was significant. What had begun in the seminaries now reached the pews. However, as will be discussed in the following chapter, while neo-scholastic methodology was prevailing in the seminaries, theologians such as Dom Odo Casel were developing progressive theologies in the monasteries of France and Germany.¹⁰⁹ Such theological thought ran contrary to the neo-scholastic theology expounded in the manualist tradition.

In his *The Sacraments: A Dogmatic Treatise 'the Holy Eucharist'* Joseph Pohle fails to give sufficient attention to the resurrection when considering the Eucharistic celebration.¹¹⁰ Throughout his 320 page manual Jesus' rising from the dead is mentioned a mere 12 times, whereas His death on the Cross is mentioned 144 times. Furthermore, the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharistic celebration is mentioned 636 times compared to the commemorative aspect of the Eucharist being mentioned only 26 times. Such figures may appear to be void of meaning, but when one considers what it is that these figures signify it becomes apparent that there has been an emphasis placed on Jesus' dying and the sacrificial

Dogmatic Theology: The Sources of Revelation Divine Faith, trans. John J. Castlot and William R. Murphy, vol. III (Cork: The Mecer Press, 1963).

¹⁰⁹ Dom Odo Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, ed. Burkhard Neunheuser, trans. Verlag Friedrich Pustet (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999). This book is a translation of *Das christliche Kultmysterium* (4th ed., Regensburg, 1960). Joost van Rossum notes that this translation is not always correct, but to the best of his knowledge it is the only English translation of Odo Casel's work.

¹¹⁰ Pohle, *The Sacraments: A Dogmatic Treatise 'the Holy Eucharist'*, II, 12, 64, 66, 79, 85, 99, 114, 170, 173, 240, 224.

dimension of the Eucharist at the expense of His resurrection and the memorial aspect of the Eucharist.

The first 175 pages of Pohle's manual focus solely on the fact of Jesus' real presence in the sacred species. With such a strong focus given to the *fact* of His real presence, he draws upon the biblical testimony only for scriptural proofs of His real presence in the Eucharistic celebration. For him, Christ is only present under the sacred species and through the priestly minister celebrating the Mass.¹¹¹ Hence, when Bermejo stated that "for them Christ is present under the twin symbols of bread and wine and that is, for all practical purposes, the end of the Eucharist"¹¹² it was in reference to such theological reflection on the Eucharist. Cesare Giraudo, in his survey of the manualist tradition, observes that such an approach to the Eucharist was common for such writers.¹¹³ In his analysis, Giraudo highlights that the *real* presence of Christ was central to the manuals treatment of the Eucharist. He suggests that the Eucharistic presence of Jesus often occupied two-thirds to three-fourths of the total scope dedicated to the Eucharist in the neo-scholastic manuals. The manuals treated the Eucharistic presence of Christ with stark focus on the sacred species – the Eucharistic symbols of bread and wine – and little attention was given either to the risen Jesus' other modes of presence or to the memorial dimension of the Eucharistic celebration.

While Pohle does state that Christ's presence in the Eucharist cannot be understood through scientific means as it belongs to the sphere of resurrection, it is not made clear that it is the *risen, glorified, transfigured* Christ that is present in various modes in the Eucharistic celebration.¹¹⁴ For him, Christ's presence only concerns the consecrated host on the altar and

¹¹¹ Pohle, *The Sacraments: A Dogmatic Treatise 'the Holy Eucharist', II*, 9-184.

¹¹² Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, xii.

¹¹³ Cesare Giraudo, *Eucaristia Per La Chiesa: Prospettive Teologiche Sull'eucaristia a Partire Dalla "Lex Orandi"*, Aloisiana 22 (Brescia; Rome: Morcelliana; Pontificia Univ Gregoriana, 1989).

¹¹⁴ Pohle writes that, "[W]e must always remember that the mode of existence peculiar to the Eucharistic Body of Our Lord does not come within the scope of physics or mechanics, but belongs strictly to the supernatural

this is the climax of the Eucharistic celebration. He does not mention or develop the risen Jesus' presence in the gathered assembly. For Pohle, Christ's presence does not concern the mystical body as He is only present in the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine. Therefore, for him, the transformed elements of bread and wine are the most important aspect of the entire Eucharistic celebration. For him the focal point, source and climax of the Eucharistic celebration is the conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood of the crucified Jesus. Here, it becomes clear that Pohle's theology of the Eucharist, like de la Taille's, is impoverished as a result of his sole focus on the Eucharistic conversion.

Additionally, Pohle's treatise is further impoverished by understanding Calvary solely within the context of Christ's death. By building on classical Christology, the resurrection is passed over in almost total silence in his treatise. As has been explained above, Calvary can only be understood when Jesus' dying and rising are given equal consideration. When developing the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharistic celebration he speaks only of Jesus' suffering on the Cross and its relation to the sacrificial victim on the altar, "[W]hat the Lord did not tolerate on the Cross, He tolerates now in the sacrifice, for the Love of thee..."¹¹⁵ Christ's rising from the dead is only mentioned in its relation to the Eucharistic pledge of the future resurrection of believers or for apologetic purposes. Such theology fails to express the indispensability of Jesus' resurrection to an understanding of the Eucharistic sacrifice. It fails to discern the offering and acceptance dimension of sacrifice and the importance of understanding that the whole Paschal Mystery is being commemorated in the Eucharistic celebration. Therefore, such theology presents a serious neglect of Jesus rising from the dead.

order as the virgin birth of Christ, His resurrection from a sealed tomb, His transfiguration, etc". Pohle, *The Sacraments: A Dogmatic Treatise 'the Holy Eucharist'*, II, 165. Here, the influence of classical Christology can be seen as his argument works from the Chalcedonian Creed. Briefly stated, similar to traditional Christology, Pohle moves betwixt and between the orders of reality in such a way that he fails to make clear where ordinary history begins or ends.

¹¹⁵ Pohle, *The Sacraments: A Dogmatic Treatise 'the Holy Eucharist'*, II, 71.

2.7. Brief Synopsis

Pohle's treatment of the Eucharist demonstrates that theologians of the manualist tradition, in their theologies of the Eucharist, neglected Christ's resurrection as their reflection developed from classical Christology. By drawing attention to Jesus' rising from the dead in their theology only for dogmatic or apologetic purposes, Christ's resurrection is not recognised as the locus for theological reflection on the Eucharist. The theology of Pohle and his contemporaries amongst the manualist tradition relied on the theology of scholastic theologians, to such an extent, that their theologies of the Eucharist were blinded by the mystery of Christ's incarnation and the redemptive act of Christ's suffering on the Cross.

Similar to traditional Christology, such theology falls short of what is required to give a richer consideration of the mystery encountered in the Eucharistic celebration. It fails to develop an understanding of the Eucharist that is attentive to the Easter mystery. Such manuals were more demonstrative than intuitive, and gave little attention to liturgical experience. The manualists in their theologies of the Eucharist focused the greater part of their reflection on Christ's real presence in the sacred species, the process of "the Change" and how the celebration of the Eucharist should be carried out according to the rules. Such theology reflects a narrow and rigid approach to the Eucharistic celebration.

Furthermore, the manuals treatment of the Eucharist reflects a fragmented view of the Easter reality. Theologians did not discern that it is the whole redemption which is commemorated in the Eucharistic celebration. In the manuals, Calvary is understood only from the standpoint of Christ death and the Eucharistic reality becomes fragmented as theologians were not attentive to the intrinsic relationship that exists between the whole Paschal Mystery and the Eucharistic celebration. Additionally, the manualists present Christ's presence as that of a suffering victim. Such theology does not recognise that it is the *risen, glorified* and *transfigured* Christ who present in the Eucharist. Hence, neo-scholastic treatments of Christ's

presence in the Eucharistic celebration and the Eucharistic sacrifice were underdeveloped. Christ was understood as being present only under the elements of Bread and Wine, a view that perceives Jesus' presence in the Eucharist as being merely one dimensional.

Likewise, treatises such as Pohle's and de la Taille's do not make clear that the Eucharist can only be understood as a sacrifice when Calvary is perceived as the witness to the entire redemptive work of Christ. The manuals treatments were not attentive to the transformative power of the Spirit that permeates the Eucharistic celebration and the Church. Such theology emulates the impoverished understanding of the Eucharist which prevailed in the seminaries throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, while Pohle and his colleagues among the manualists held their ground in the seminaries, something far more dynamic was going on among those involved with the liturgical renewal on mainland Europe.

Chapter Three

An Emerging Perspective: A Retrieval of the Paschal Mystery

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter it has been demonstrated that the *strange neglect* of Jesus' resurrection in sacramental theology emerged from the influence of classical Christology. It has been illustrated that this failure to engage with Christ's resurrection presents itself most clearly in the theology of the neo-scholastic manuals. Chapter Three will examine the way in which theologians of the Eucharist began to move away from the rigid theology of the manualist tradition will be demonstrated. The following will endeavour to illustrate how this break found its fullest expression in the writings of theologians who were involved in the liturgical renewal on mainland Europe and in particular in the Mystical theology of the Benedictine monk Dom Odo Casel (1886-1948).

By rediscovering the theology of the early Church Fathers, and engaging with scripture in a fuller way, theologies on the Eucharist were revitalised by a renewed appreciation of the Paschal Mystery. This chapter draws attention to the dynamic theology of Dom Odo Casel and explores the way in which his contemplative theological and historical insights influenced twentieth century liturgical renewal. It will be shown that the acceptance of Casel's insights at official levels of the Church resulted from the efforts of other eminent theologians to refine and modify his theology and that these endeavours reached a climax with the reform of the liturgy inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

3.2. Breaking with the Rigidity of Neo-Scholastic Theologies of the Eucharist

3.2.1. Dom Odo Casel, O.S.B

It is now fifty-two years since the promulgation of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963), a document that definitively changed the way in which we engage with and understand the liturgy, especially the Eucharistic celebration. The document witnessed the official acceptance of the centrality of the Paschal Mystery in relation to the liturgy. By recognising this integral dimension, the Constitution inaugurated significant liturgical reform, a reform which would not have been possible without the dynamic theology expounded by theologians such as the Benedictine liturgist, Dom Odo Casel (1886-1948). Casel dedicated his life "to the contemplative study of the Paschal Mystery against the backdrop of the Greek mystery religions and the writings of early Greek Fathers."¹¹⁶ His mystical theology provided a richer and more dynamic way of comprehending the Eucharist compared to that being taught in the seminaries at that time.

Casel's theology of the Eucharist stands in sharp contrast to the theology of the manualists writers such as De La Taille,¹¹⁷ who provided a neat answer to the Tridentine question which appeared at times to be somewhat "contrived for the purpose of supporting orthodoxy."¹¹⁸ However, Casel's mystical theology remained controversial amongst theologians of the early twentieth century, many of whom criticised his biblical analysis and the way in which he presented the Christian mysteries.¹¹⁹ Patrick Prétot, on the other hand claims that the doctrine

¹¹⁶ Denis O'Callaghan, "Dom Odo Casel and the Mystery of Christian Worship," *The Furrow* 66, no. 1 (2015): 29.

¹¹⁷ William Busch, "Liturgy in Our Seminaries," *Orate Fratres* 22, no. 7 (1948): 291-97.

¹¹⁸ O'Callaghan, "Dom Odo Casel and the Mystery of Christian Worship," 30.

¹¹⁹ Aidan Kavanagh in his introduction to Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, vii. See also; Joost van Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 22, no. 2-3 (1978): 141-43.

of the mysteries had often been poorly understood.¹²⁰ He suggests that this is partially due to the fact that “it was more intuitive than demonstrative.”¹²¹ Casel’s theological reflection differed greatly from the Scholastic way of *doing* theology and the manuals which it inspired. Yet, Burkhard Neunheuser proposes that theologians were, to a certain extent, apprehensive of Casel work. He claims that theologians would “appeal to other writers like Johannes Betz¹²² and Wilhelm Stählin¹²³ – who expressly evoke Casel”¹²⁴ rather than having to name him. This suggests that perhaps it was not surprising that Casel’s key ideas failed to achieve wide acceptance until some thirty years later, following the publication in 1932 of his work, *Das Christliche Kultmysterium*.

Although many theologians failed initially to comprehend the richness of Casel’s insight, contemporary understanding of the Church and its liturgy was greatly influenced by his theology, with Kavanagh speaking of him as a true contemplative.¹²⁵ This point can be clearly seen when Casel’s theology is viewed as having moved away from that reflected in the manualist tradition. Casel did not follow a traditional approach to liturgics which customarily focused on rubrics, namely, how is worship supposed to be carried out according to the rules. Rather, he claimed that such an approach failed to recognise the significance of what is *done* in the liturgy.¹²⁶ Casel developed a way of understanding the Church and its

¹²⁰ See especially, T. Filthaut, *La Théologie Des Mystères, Exposé Et Controverses*, trans. J. C. Diolier and A. Liefoghe (Tournai: Desclée, 1954); Irénée Henri Dalmais, *La Doctrine Des Mystères' (Mysterienlehre) De Dom Casel*, new ed., vol. 1, L'église En Prière (Paris: Desclée, 1984), 275-81.

¹²¹ Patrick Prétot, "The Sacraments as "Celebrations of the Church": Liturgy's Impact on Sacramental Theology," in *Sacraments: Revelation of the Humanity of God: Engaging the Fundamental Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet*, ed. Philippe Bordeyne and Bruce T. Morrill (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008), 29.

¹²² In particular see, Johannes Betz, *Die Eucharistie in Der Zeit Der Griechischen Väter* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964). It is significant to note that two volumes of this treatise appeared by 1961 (Freiburg 1955-1961).

¹²³ See especially, Wilhelm Stählin, *Mysterium : Vom Geheimnis Gottes* (Kassel: Stauda, 1970).

¹²⁴ Burkhard Neunheuser, "Odo Casel in Retrospect and Prospect," *Worship* 50, no. 6 (1976): 490.

¹²⁵ Casel’s treatment of the liturgy is in dialogue with the issues of his time. Casel’s work held together both vision and action. See, Aidan Kavanagh introduction to Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, vii-xii.

¹²⁶ Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, trans. Asheleigh E Moorhouse, 4 vols., vol. 4, The Library of Orthodox Theology (New York: The Faith Press, 1975), 9. Furthermore, the verb *done* also draws attention to the way that Casel understands the Liturgy, particularly the Eucharist. He claims that the

liturgy as something totally Other at a time when western thought was enthralled by rationalism and scientific methods. For instance, Kavanagh draws attention to the apophatic¹²⁷ character of Casel's theology. He writes, "...there is nothing that is anthropocentric, rationalistic, subjective, or sentimental... The Mystery is, after all, divine at its source."¹²⁸ A contributing factor to this shift was Casel's view that the sacramental theology inspired by scholastic methodology was limited due to an unstable ecclesiological base.

Casel emphasised that neo-scholastic ecclesiology substituted an image of *Christus Solus* signifying 'Christ alone, present in the ministry of the priest, and acting on behalf of the people' for the Augustinian image of the *Christus Totus* signifying 'Christ in the midst of the Church, together with the Church which is gathered to himself'.¹²⁹ He also suggests that another restrictive aspect was its conflation of the Trinitarian structure of sacramental worship into a purely Christological configuration. Casel claimed that this resulted in the Holy Spirit been neglected as the agent of transformation of all that is placed with Christ. From this standpoint, Casel replaced a Christocentric approach customary of scholastic inspired sacramental theology for a theocentric approach. Thus, it can be discerned that Casel's theology makes a significant break with traditional approaches to the liturgy. Contrary to conventional theologies of the Eucharist, Casel's liturgical conception does not

Eucharist is more verb than noun. The Eucharistic celebration is something the Church actively *does*. Such language makes clear that for Casel the Eucharist is ultimately an action – it is a many-faceted singular action.

¹²⁷ The term 'apophatic' derives from the Greek term *apophanai* meaning to speak out, to deny. Apophatic theology evolved through the theology of the Cappadocian Fathers, namely, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nazianzus. However, apophatic theology must be distinguished from *via negativa* developed by St. Thomas Aquinas which is a corrective to an affirming theologizing about God and His essence. Rather, apophatic theology maintains such a strictly so-called *via negativa* as to break down the limitations of human thinking about God. Put simply, the closer one comes to union with God the more blinding God becomes to human reason. This is not as a result of God becoming more abstruse; rather it derives from the fact that the nature of God itself is becoming more immediately present. See especially, *The New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 58.

¹²⁸ Aidan Kavanagh in his introduction to Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, vii-xii. As has previously mentioned, Casel's theology ran contrary to the scholastic inspired theology of the manuals.

¹²⁹ Gerald Ellard, "The Body of Christ Which Is the Church," *The Irish Monthly* 72, no. 852 (1944): 237-38.

approach Christian worship from a dogmatic standpoint. However, while his reflections did not approach the liturgy from a dogmatic perspective, Charles Davis highlights that his work revitalised and enriched dogmatic understandings of the Church and its liturgy. While giving consideration to the doctrinal basis of the liturgical movement Davis states that:

[W]hatever hesitations may have been felt about the ‘theology of mysteries’ in the precise form in which he expounded it, few would deny now that his work has served to uncover the doctrinal richness implicit in the liturgy in a way that has transformed the theology of the sacraments, and of the Eucharist in particular.¹³⁰

Casel’s understanding of the liturgy possessed a strong theological and experiential character.

In a letter to a Flemish friend he writes:

The first intuition of the *Mysterienlehre* occurred to me in the liturgy during the celebration of the High Mass; for life can come forth only from life. Thereupon this perception was confirmed by the study of St. Justin Martyr; and in addition to these studies of the Fathers I started to occupy myself in Bonn particularly with the ancient mysteries, but only as a help to understanding the Christian mysteries. The ancient mysteries were for me always only a help. The true ‘*Heilige Bronnen*’¹³¹ was the celebration of the liturgy itself...Not the mere study, but the living life with Christ *in mysterio* is the last source of all true *gnosis*.¹³²

Here it can be seen that, for Casel, humankind’s primary source of knowledge (*gnosis*) about the Christian Mysterium emerges from our continual experience of the risen Christ in the liturgy. By approaching the liturgy in this way, he retrieves a way of understanding the liturgy that was more receptive of the Paschal Mystery. Such an approach presents itself as

¹³⁰ Charles Davis, *Liturgy and Doctrine: The Doctrinal Basis of the Liturgical Movement* (London: Sheed and Ward Ltd, 1964), 14.

¹³¹ The Dutch for ‘Holy Sources’, an anthology of a portion of Casel’s articles have also been published under this title.

¹³² Quoted in *Herbstbrief der Abtei vom Heiligen Kreuz zu Herstelle* (1948), 10. See also, Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 142.

being in stark contrast with the incarnation-orientated theology of the neo-scholastic manuals. Kavanagh states that this renewed perspective is Casel's most significant contribution to contemporary understandings of the Eucharist:

[T]he break with the conventional view of the liturgy begun by Casel and made formal by the Council was profound, and it is in this break (not always known or appreciated today) that Casel's import can best be seen.¹³³

Casel's theology was greatly influenced by his studies of the Church Fathers and the ancient mysteries of epoch Greece. However, many writers often overlook the influence of Matthias Joseph Scheeben on Casel, in particular, Scheeben's treatment of the Christian mysteries expounded in his book *The Mysteries of Christianity*¹³⁴ which was well received throughout the monasteries of mainland Europe when Casel began his Benedictine vocation. In his treatise, Scheeben emphasises that 'mystery' is an essential element of Christianity. He states that if Christianity brought forward no mysteries "it would stand convicted of intrinsic contradiction."¹³⁵ In fact, Scheeben claims "the truths of Christianity would not stir us as they do, nor would they draw us or hearten us, and they would not be embraced by us with such love and joy, if they contained no mysteries."¹³⁶

Augustine Kerkvoorde also highlights the importance of Scheeben's treatise for twentieth century theologians. He states "it would be difficult, perhaps, to find another treatment of the dogma as profound and inclusive, and at the same time as theologically exact, as his."¹³⁷ However, while Scheeben emphasises the centrality of mystery in his theology, his reflection remains incarnation-orientated. He fails to give sufficient attention to Jesus' resurrection. By failing to consider the incarnation in its relation to the entire Paschal Mystery, Scheeben does

¹³³ Aidan Kavanagh in his introduction to Odo Casel, "*The Mystery of Christian Worship*," vii.

¹³⁴ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, trans. S. J. Cyril Vollert (London: B. Herder Book Co, 1947).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹³⁷ Kerkvoorde, "From Other Lands: The Mystery of the Church According to Scheeben," 119.

not accentuate the intrinsic relationship between the Paschal Mystery and the Eucharist to same extent as Casel.¹³⁸ However, Scheeben does make the point that the ancient mysteries can be of assistance when trying to understand the Christian *mysterion*.¹³⁹ This view is also adopted by Casel in his treatment of the Church's liturgy.¹⁴⁰

Therefore, it can be said that Scheeben's most significant contribution to Casel's work was his emphasis on the indispensability of mystery to an understanding of the Christian tradition. His mystical perspective helped to relieve the rigid definition of sign and cause when considering the sacraments by demonstrating that there is a deeper reality to the sacraments or mysteries that can only be evoked when sufficient attention is given to the *mysterium* which permeates the Church. Such theology had a significant influence on Casel's thought and the development of his *Mysterienlehre* and it is important that this dimension of Casel's work is appreciated if his *Mysterienlehre* is to be understood in its fullest sense.

Casel states that "Christianity is of its very essence a mystery religion."¹⁴¹ He argues that Christianity is not merely a continuation of the Hellenistic mysteries. Rather, he insists upon

¹³⁸ For example, it is interesting to observe that Scheeben situates his consideration of the Eucharist directly after his treatment of the incarnation and just before his reflections on Grace. Such an approach emulates the approach taken by traditional theologies of the Eucharist which was weak in its appreciation of Jesus' resurrection. Furthermore, the scope dedicated by Scheeben to the Eucharist implies an implicit and exclusive relationship between the mystery of the incarnation and the Eucharistic mystery. Such a relationship does not include Jesus' resurrection, at least not in any meaningful way. Therefore, it does not fully engage with Jesus' rising from the dead. Also, it must be noted that Casel's theological reflection does include and engage with the resurrection of Jesus within the context of the whole mystery revealed in Him. See especially, Scheeben, "*The Mysteries of Christianity*," 3-7. And, Dom Odo Casel, *Die Liturgie Als Mysterienfeier* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Ecclesia Orans IX, 1922), 41.

¹³⁹ Alister McGrath notes that the term *mysterion* is not used in the New Testament in reference to the sacraments but to the saving work of God in general and argues that the Greek term does not refer to the sacrament alone. Furthermore, Daniel L. Migliore also stresses this point he states that the *mysterion* signified the presence and purpose of God made known in Jesus Christ, not specifically Christian rites. See both; Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* 2ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 495. And, Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 2 ed. (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 280.

¹⁴⁰ Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 9-50; Louis Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy* (London: Sheed and Ward Ltd, 1962), 86-98.

¹⁴¹ Casel, "*The Mystery of Christian Worship*," 1.

the uniqueness and newness of the Christian religion.¹⁴² Yet, Casel does not consider his work to be something new. Rather, he understands his theology as being a retrieval of the Tradition of the Fathers.¹⁴³ This is clearly presented in his study *Das Mysteriengedächtnis der Messliturgie im Lichte der Tradition*, where he writes: “Justin, Tertullian [and] Cyprian were men who stood at the head of the culture of their time. Will not conceptions like *ἀνάμνησις*, *memoria*, *figura*, *repraesentare*, *μυστήριον*, *sacramentum* [not] also contain something of the meaning they had in the culture of that time?”¹⁴⁴

Casel evokes the connection that had been made in the early Church between the economy of salvation and the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist by understanding them as mysteries.¹⁴⁵ His retrieval of mystery enabled theologians to perceive the liturgy as ritual action.¹⁴⁶ This evoked a rediscovery of the category of symbol which allowed richer consideration to given of the ecclesial dimension of Christian worship.¹⁴⁷ Integral to Casel’s theology of the Eucharist is the way in which he developed a renewed appreciation of the centrality of the whole Paschal Mystery in relation to the Church’s Sacred Year. He proposes that the *sacramentum paschale* is present and active in both the Church and its liturgy, that Christ has passed-over (Pasch) into the Church and its liturgy through His death and resurrection.

¹⁴² For example, Casel states “[T]hey [i.e. the ancient mysteries] did not give existence or content; how, indeed, were the weak and poor elements of the world to attain of themselves the mystery of Christ? But they made it possible to give body to the new and unconceived elements of the New Testament revelation.” See, Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 33.

¹⁴³ Rossum, “Dom Odo Casel Osb,” 147.

¹⁴⁴ Dom Odo Casel, “Das Mysteriengedächtnis Der Meßliturgie Im Lichte Der Tradition,” *J. L. W* 6 (1926): 133.

¹⁴⁵ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 495.

¹⁴⁶ See in particular, Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages Historical Survey*, trans. Gemma Simmonds CJ, Richard Price, and Christopher Stephens (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 13-101.

¹⁴⁷ See especially, Louis-Marie Chauvet, “Sacraments,” *Catholicisme XIII*, no. fasc. 60 (1992): 28-34. See also, Henri de Lubac’s treatment of the Eucharist and the Church in the Middle ages, Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages Historical Survey*, 101-22.

3.2.2. *The Fullness of Time*

When treating the relationship between the mystery revealed in Jesus and the Church's Sacred Year, Casel utilises the Pauline expression "...but when the completion of the time came, God sent his Son" (Gal 4:4).¹⁴⁸ This presents itself as the starting point of his liturgical conception. For Casel, the statement that Christ has come in the fullness of time "to recapitulate all things in him..." (Eph 1:10) signifies that Christ has not only prepared the Jews for his coming but the whole of humankind. He emphasises this point highlighting the words of St Justin Martyr, "all who have lived with the *Logos* are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus and men like them..."¹⁴⁹

Joost van Rossum notes that "the last phase of Greek philosophy was no longer pure Greek."¹⁵⁰ In this statement he is referring to the time into which Christ was born. At the time of Jesus' coming society was pluralistic and exhibited a "real ecumenical culture"¹⁵¹ known as Hellenism. During this time there was a revival of a unique cult that had already existed in the classical epoch of Greece which centred on the ancient mysteries.¹⁵² Casel suggests that such esoteric cults catered for the religious needs of the time,¹⁵³ needs such as "the longing for salvation (σωτηρία) of the individual soul and the acquisition of immortality."¹⁵⁴ He provides a definition of the essence of these ancient mysteries:

¹⁴⁸ The English Standard Version (ESV) reads: "when the fullness of time had come..." Where as, the Revised Standard Version (RSV) reads: "when time had fully come..." It is also interesting to note that Gal 4: 4-7 is the Epistle reading for Christmas in the Orthodox Church.

¹⁴⁹ I Apol. 46. Casel, *Die Liturgie Als Mysterienfeier*, 2f.

¹⁵⁰ Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 142.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² A significantly in-depth study of the religions of epoch Greece and particularly of the gods of Homer, see; Jane E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (London: Cambridge University Press Warehouse, 1908).

¹⁵³ Casel, *Die Liturgie Als Mysterienfeier*, 47.

¹⁵⁴ Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 142-43.

[T]he mystery is a sacred ritual action in which a saving deed is made present through the rite; the congregation, by performing the rite, take part in the saving act and thereby win salvation.¹⁵⁵

The writings of the Romanian anthropologist and philosopher of religion, Mircea Eliade, are particularly helpful when attempting to understand this point. In his book *Myth and Reality*¹⁵⁶ he observes how primordial civilisations encountered the transcendent and participated in Divine life. Here, he argues that *homo religiosus* is orientated towards the transcendent.¹⁵⁷ Eliade emphasises the importance of symbol as, for him, it is only through symbol that one can experience the transcendent. He states that by engaging in ritualistic action, re-telling their sacred history and emulating the gods, primordial societies participated in transcendent realities. Such ritualistic action acted as the accommodator of the Divine-human encounter.

Similarly, Casel observes that the neophyte in the ancient mysteries, through ritual action, suffers with the god and the joy of the god then becomes their joy, usually through their participation in their god's death and resurrection.¹⁵⁸ The neophyte symbolically, by means of a cult or a liturgy, participates in divine life.¹⁵⁹ The active role played by the participant in

¹⁵⁵ Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 54. See also, Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 99-100.

¹⁵⁶ Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Illinois: Waveland Press Inc, 1963).

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-16.

¹⁵⁸ It is significant to note that the life of the gods in the ancient mysteries was not the same as the life of the eternally young and cheerful gods of Homer. For example, the gods of the ancient mysteries experienced suffering and the *μυστήρις*, through the means of a cult or liturgy, suffered with their god. See especially, Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, 292-332. See additionally; Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 14-15.

¹⁵⁹ Here, it is important to note that Jesus' resurrection presents itself as something radically different to the type of resurrection spoken of in the ancient mysteries. Christ's resurrection is unique; it is the crowning act of God's love for His people. See Daniel Kendall and Gerald O'Collins, "The Uniqueness of the Easter Appearances," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (1992): 287-307. Furthermore, N.T Wright provides a detailed account of the distinctiveness of Jesus' resurrection from that of the ancient mysteries. See, N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 4 vols., vol. 3, *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003). Additionally see, Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 143. For a more detailed analysis of the language of the ancient mysteries see especially, A. K. Morgan, *Myth and Philosophy: From Pre-Socratics to Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Also for a more in-depth study of the function of myth and

these ancient mysteries greatly influenced Casel's liturgical conception and can best be seen in the emphasis that he places on the laity's 'active participation' in the Church's liturgy. He proposes that these mysteries simultaneously helped to prepare the coming of Jesus Christ:

[A]ll these mysteries offered, is fulfilled in Christ. They offer knowledge (*gnosis*); in Him all the treasures of wisdom are concluded. They brought union with the godhead and hoped of a blessed Other Life; now it is said: Christ in you, the hope of glory. They promised the fullness of dwelling (in man) of the divinity; in Christ the fullness of the divinity dwells bodily and in Him and through Him Christians are also filled with God. As for their rites and laws of cult, they were only a shadow, which the rising figure of Christ casts in advance.¹⁶⁰

In brief, for Casel, all that has come before and after Jesus' salvific life is completed in Him. Casel draws attention to the ambiguous attitude of the Church Fathers in relation to the ancient mysteries, "the Fathers of the Church reject the pagan secret cults with aversion, yes with disgust and abomination. But in spite of it they could appreciate the presentiments and longings which were expressed by them."¹⁶¹ Furthermore, Casel draws attention to the way in which the language of the mysteries did not remain confined to esoteric cults. He claims that philosophers made good use of the terminology of the mysteries, namely, Plato and other later 'mystically' orientated thinkers.¹⁶² Similarly, he argues that certain terms of the mysteries can be observed in Christian literature.

ritual in *societas* see, Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 189-90; Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, 94-96; Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 100; *Myth and Reality*, 14-15.

¹⁶⁰ Casel, *Die Liturgie Als Mysterienfeier*, 47.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² See especially, Dom Odo Casel, *De Philosophorum Graecorum Silentio Mystico* (Giessen: Alfred Publishing Töpelmann, 1919); "Das Mysteriengedächtnis Der Meßliturgie Im Lichte Der Tradition," 138; "Mysteriengegenwart," *J. L. W* 8 (1928): 145 ff, 225 ff.

3.2.3. *The Christian Mysterium*

Casel claims that Christian literature has sometimes used a distinctively mysteriological language.¹⁶³ According to Casel, St Paul "...thinks of Christianity, the good news, as a mystery..."¹⁶⁴ When speaking about the Christian *mysterium*, Casel argues that Paul utilises mysteriological language which can be seen in his letters to the early Christian communities. For example, the term *μυστήριον* meaning "the pre-temporal Council of God which is hidden from the world but revealed in the spiritual"¹⁶⁵ is evident in Paul's letters. While such language possesses an unmistakable mysteriological character, Paul's understanding of *mysterium* was not merely "...in the sense of a hidden, mysterious teaching about the things of God..."¹⁶⁶ Rather, Casel emphasises that for St. Paul *mysterium* signifies:

...a deed of God, the execution of an everlasting plan of his through an act which proceeds from his eternity, realized in time and the world, and returning once more to him its goal in eternity."¹⁶⁷

In his letter to the Romans, Paul speaks of the "...mystery which for endless ages was kept secret but now [as the prophets wrote] is revealed, as the eternal God commanded, to be made know to all nations..." (Rom 16:25f).¹⁶⁸ As in similar texts, this statement is referring to the basic and central 'dogma' of Christianity – the Incarnation of Christ.¹⁶⁹ Hence, for Casel, Paul understands Jesus and His redemptive work as 'the mystery of God':¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³ Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 143. See also; Dom Odo Casel, "Zur Kultsprache Des Heiligen Paulus," A. L. W 1 (1950): 1-64.

¹⁶⁴ Casel *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 9.

¹⁶⁵ Günther Bornkamm, "Musterion," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, G. Friedrich, and G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1974), 820.

¹⁶⁶ Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 9.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 9f; See also, Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 144.

¹⁶⁹ 1 Cor 2:6f; Eph 1:8-10, 3:3-12, 6:19; Col 1:26-28, 2:2:3, 4:3.

¹⁷⁰ Col 2:2. Casel has interpreted this text in the following manner: "... the knowledge of God's mystery: Christ." See both: Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 9; Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 144.

[W]e can express the mystery, so conceived, by the one word: 'Christ,' meaning by it the Saviour's person together with His mystical body, the Church. It embraces first of all God's incarnation, which is His last and final revelation to the world.¹⁷¹

This view is central to Casel's liturgical conception. For him the mystery of God, that is to say, Christ himself, together with his salvific work – is present in the Church which is His mystical body.¹⁷² Understanding that the whole Paschal Mystery is present in the Church is fundamental to a rich consideration of the liturgy and the Church's Sacred Year. Here, the words of Pope Leo the Great (461 AD) are of particular significance to Casel's liturgical conception, "[W]hat was visible in our Redeemer has passed over to the sacraments (or mysteries)."¹⁷³ Casel emphasises that the Church's Sacred Year should be understood as a single mystery, "[T]he whole Church year is, therefore, a single mystery. Its high-point is mystery in the highest sense, the *sacramentum paschale*."¹⁷⁴

For Casel, each Sunday the mystery of Easter is brought to parish faithful, "...the redemption which reaches its height in the sacrifice of the Cross and the glory of the Church which goes from the resurrection, are mystically carried out and brought to the faithful."¹⁷⁵ Thus, the liturgy must be understood as being saturated by the whole Paschal mystery. The liturgy is alive in the mystery of the risen Christ's presence. According to Casel, Jesus' death and resurrection are not simply events that occurred in a distant past. Rather, the economy of salvation is not static: it is ongoing through the Church and its liturgy. The words of

¹⁷¹ Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 9-10.

¹⁷² Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 144.

¹⁷³ "*Quod itaque Redemptoris nostri conspicuum fuit, in sacramenta transivit.*" St. Leo the Great, *Sermon 74*, 2; PL 54:298. Patrick Prétot suggests that this shorthand version possibly hasn't served the thought of Casel to the extent that St. Leo's phrase focuses its attention on the actualisation of the events of the celebration of the mysteries while posing the question: how can a past event be made present in a liturgical celebration? See; Prétot, "The Sacraments as "Celebrations of the Church": Liturgy's Impact on Sacramental Theology," 29.

¹⁷⁴ Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 30.

¹⁷⁵ Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 147.

Kavanagh further accentuate this point: “this is the Mystery the liturgy celebrates, the Mystery that the Church cherishes as its source and centre.”¹⁷⁶

Casel proposes that because the source of mystery is God, the celebration of mystery finds expression in magnificent transcendentalism and objective contemplation culminating in a rigorous theocentrism. Hence, he emphasises that the laity are not passive observers of the *mysterium*. Rather, they participate in the *mysterium* through the Church’s liturgical action. When there is no participatory dimension in liturgical worship the faithful are starved of spiritual nourishment. While the indwelling of the Spirit in humankind is in an indisputable truth, this is to say, that human existence is indubitably a grace-filled existence, it is through one’s own participation in the divine life of the risen Christ that this reality is realised. It is through person’s continuous experience of the glorified transfigured Christ in worship that this existential reality is sustained, nourished and allowed to flourish. Hence, Casel’s emphasises that it necessary for the laity’s to actively participate in the liturgy. He proposes that when the laity actively participates in the liturgy, they actively participate in the mystery of salvation. This point is integral to Casel’s consideration of the Eucharist and the sacraments or mysteries in general.

3.2.4. *The Eucharist: A ‘Wiedergegenwärtigung’ of the Paschal Mystery*

Casel understands the sacraments or mysteries as liturgical actions. He stresses that they must be comprehended as actions that are *done* by the whole Church. Furthermore, he suggests that it is through liturgical action that the Church becomes a body under the ecclesial motif of ‘mystery’. Contrary to the scholastic inspired manualist tradition, Casel’s point of view not only retrieved an understanding of the Church as ‘mystery’ but brought with it a richer

¹⁷⁶ Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, xi.

conception of the work of grace implied in the sacramental order.¹⁷⁷ However, it is important to stress that Casel insists that more has to be present in a sacrament than graces for the faithful, or even the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.¹⁷⁸ While graces and real presence are certainly involved, Casel claims that there is *something* prior to them and enabling of them that is of the utmost importance. For him, this *something* is the active presence of the saving mystery of the incarnate Christ. Casel evokes the way in which the risen Jesus is climatically present in our midst, together with His redemptive work, in the Church's two central sacraments or mysteries, Baptism and the Eucharist.

Casel's understanding of what is done in Baptism develops from St Paul's understanding that Baptism is a participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. The words of St Paul, particularly in Romans 6:3ff and Colossians 2:12f, are interpreted by Casel as follows:

[W]hen man in the faith of the power of Christ descends in the water and as it were goes down in it, he dies, however not really, but mystically, inasmuch as the death of Christ, through which He destroyed sin, is transferred to him; when he emerges from the womb of the water, a new life begins for him: that life of purity and complete union with God, like Christ led after the Resurrection.¹⁷⁹

Casel claims that when Clement of Alexandria referred to Baptism as an "illumination by which that holy, saving light is contemplated"¹⁸⁰ his statement was not accidental. Clement

¹⁷⁷ Prétot, "The Sacraments as "Celebrations of the Church": Liturgy's Impact on Sacramental Theology," 29. See also; Chauvet, "Sacraments," 326-61.

¹⁷⁸ See especially, Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 144.

¹⁷⁹ Casel, *Die Liturgie Als Mysterienfeier*, 50f.

¹⁸⁰ Φώτισμα δε δι' οὗ τὸ ἅγιον ἐκεῖνο φῶς τὸ σωτήριον ἐποπτεύεται. Clément d'Alexandrie, *Paedagogus I*, vol. 26, 2; *Sources Chrétiennes*, vol. 70 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1960), 158; *Protrepticus*, vol. XII, 120; *Sources Chrétiennes*, vol. 2 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1949), 189. "O truly sacred mysteries! O pure Light! In the blaze of the torches I have a vision of heaven and of God": "Ὡ. των αγίων ὡς ἀληθῶς μυστηρίων, ὦ φωτός ἀκίρατου. Δαδουχοῦμαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐποπτεῦσαι. The terminology used by Clement here is taken from the mysteries of Eleusis: ἐποπτεύω meaning behold or contemplate this is the term which refers to the highest degree of "initiation"; δαδουχέω: "conduct with torches, celebrate by carrying torches in procession."

uses such terms because they partially express by their analogy the richness contained in the Christian *mysterium*.¹⁸¹ Casel outlines that through Baptism human beings become members of the mystical body of Christ, i.e. the Church: “[T]herefore, through initiation [Baptism and Confirmation] man becomes a living member of Christ, a *christus*.”¹⁸² For instance, he highlights St Paul’s use of the term *homoioima* meaning ‘conformed to’, rather than ‘similar’ or ‘like’.¹⁸³ By this Casel does not mean that the human person in Baptism dies the same death Christ died, nor does he mean that he rises in the same way that Christ did. Kavanagh illuminate the way in which Casel develops this point of view:

[T]hus Christ died once and for all on the Cross and risen once and for all from the tomb in Jerusalem: our death and rising in Baptism are conformed to his so closely that we may say that we have died and risen in his death and resurrection.¹⁸⁴

Casel highlights the transformative power of the risen Christ experienced through Baptism: “[N]ow he is no *mere* man, but man transformed, divinized, new-begotten out of God to be God’s child. He carries the life of God within him.”¹⁸⁵ He accentuates the relationship between Christ and his mystical body, “[A]s a member of the High-Priest, Christ, he himself *christus*, an anointed one; he is a priest who may sacrifice to God the Father a sacrifice which through Christ becomes uniquely acceptable and accepted.”¹⁸⁶ Casel’s words allude to the importance of understanding Calvary within the context of both Jesus’ death and resurrection

Additionally, the *δαδουχος* was one of the chief officers in the Eleusinian mysteries. See especially, G. W. H. Lampe, ed. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961).

¹⁸¹ Casel, *Die Liturgie Als Mysterienfeier*, 55. See also; Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 145.

¹⁸² Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 18f.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, xi.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 18f.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* See also, Alcuin Reid, *The Organic Development of the Liturgy: The Principles of the Liturgical Reform and Their Relation to the Twentieth Century Liturgical Movement Prior to the Second Vatican Council* (Farnborough: Saint Michael's Abbey Press, 2004), 108.

in relation to the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist.¹⁸⁷ He also demonstrates the importance of the Eucharistic celebration for the baptised in their new life in Christ. He writes that in the Mass "...the concretion of elements by God's deed, which the priest performs in God's power, again sets out the sacrificing death of the Lord in the *mysterium*."¹⁸⁸ Therefore, for Casel, in the Eucharist Christ offers Himself in a sacramental manner, "in His mystery He suffers for us anew."¹⁸⁹

Casel proclaims that the Eucharistic sacrifice is not only offered by the priest but the whole mystical body, i.e. the Church. He states that "...the Church 'through the priest's ministry'¹⁹⁰ carries out the mystery and so offers her Bridegroom's sacrifice; it is then, at the same time, her sacrifice."¹⁹¹ It is significant here that Casel's words are not misinterpreted. By this he does not imply that the Eucharist is a new sacrifice of Christ. On the contrary, his words signify that the historical sacrifice of Jesus and the Eucharistic sacrifice are identical. He claims that "[T]he sacrifice of the Cross and the sacrifice of the Mass are identical with regard to the Gift, the Priest and the Act. It is only in the second case that the sacrifice appears in a sacramental way."¹⁹² Thus, for Casel, the Eucharistic celebration is a "*Wiedergegenwärtigung*"¹⁹³ or a "*sakramentale Vergegenwärtigung*"¹⁹⁴ of Jesus Christ's salvific acts.¹⁹⁵ Rossum suggests that what Casel is referring to here, is not that in the Eucharistic celebration Jesus' salvific acts are represented separately, but rather that:

¹⁸⁷ For example, the significance of this has been outlined in the previous chapter whilst discussing Bermejo's theology. It was stressed that the banquet of the sacrificial memorial can only be perceived as such when Calvary is understood as holding together both death and resurrection in an unbreakable unity.

¹⁸⁸ Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 24.

¹⁸⁹ Gregorius Magnus, *Hom. In Evang.* 37, 7; PL 76: 1279A.

¹⁹⁰ *Tridentium, Sessio 22*.

¹⁹¹ Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 24.

¹⁹² Casel, "Das Mysteriengedächtnis Der Meßliturgie Im Lichte Der Tradition," 189f.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 146. See also; Neunheuser, "Odo Casel in Retrospect and Prospect," 489-504; "Mystery Presence," *Worship* 34, no. 3 (1960): 120-27; Arthur Darby Nock, "Odo Casel," *Numen* 1 (1954):

[T]he faithful unite themselves spiritually most fervently with the doing of their Saviour and Lord; they sacrifice themselves with Him and through Him and appropriate the redemption which is performed objectively by Christ; they draw from the sources of the Redeemer. They suffer with Him, rise with Him, are transfigured with Him and enter His heavenly being.¹⁹⁶

By actively participating in the Eucharistic celebration the faithful enter into communion with and are conformed to the glorified transfigured Christ. Casel states that “those who do this [the Eucharist] are called the Church, Christ’s Body – a great holy mystery if there ever was one.”¹⁹⁷ The mystical body performs with the risen Jesus “a holy, saving drama.”¹⁹⁸ However, Casel stresses that this is not a naturalistic, hysterical spectacle. Rather, “everything is condensed in the symbolic-mystical act of the consecration of the elements.”¹⁹⁹

While Casel holds on to the traditional Roman Catholic idea that the ‘change’ of the elements of bread and wine is performed by the Words of Institution, he remains attentive to the fact that according to the early Tradition the “entire Eucharistic Canon, which was considered as a whole, has been understood as an invocation and prayer for the Change.”²⁰⁰ He emphasises the oneness of the Eucharistic celebration, that it is a multi-dimensional singular action. For him, the liturgical *mysterium* is a single mystery. In the Eucharistic celebration the mystical body gathers to celebrate the Easter mystery, here the mystery of Christ and His redemptive work is made present through liturgical anamnesis. However, through this action the faithful not only encounter the transfigured exalted Christ now in his Spirit-filled existence but participate in the mystery revealed in Him. Casel’s teaching can be synthesised as follows:

85-84. Here, Van Rossum claims that it is very difficult to translate these German terms. In particular, he notes the term ‘representation’ as being an especially problematic translation as it can cause a variety of misunderstandings. See especially, Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 146.

¹⁹⁶ Casel, *Die Liturgie Als Mysterienfeier*, 65.

¹⁹⁷ Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 44.

¹⁹⁸ Casel, *Die Liturgie Als Mysterienfeier*, 65.

¹⁹⁹ Rossum, "Dom Odo Casel Osb," 146. See also; Casel, *Die Liturgie Als Mysterienfeier*, 65.

²⁰⁰ Dom Odo Casel, *Das Gedächtnis Des Herrn in Der Altchristlichen Liturgie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Ecclesia Orans II, 1918), 24.

...in the liturgy, as in the Church generally, Christ is present not just as the object of our pious memory but present in his saving acts – he dies not again but *still*, rises not again but *still* – in us, by us, and through us for the life of the world.²⁰¹

For Casel, this is the mystery celebrated in the liturgy. He states that it is always the glorified *Kyrios* whom the mystical body has in their vision and to whom the mystical body calls out. As the liturgy and the Church's Sacred Year form a single mystery, the *sacramentum paschale*, each occasion celebrated by the Church is but another view point of the Easter mystery. For instance, Casel highlights that Christmas and the Epiphany are not just the commemoration of the birth of Jesus. Rather, he suggests that what is being celebrated is “the entire redemptive mystery, but now seen from the view-point of the incarnation.”²⁰² For Casel in the liturgy, especially through Eucharistic action, the mystical body brings together in a singular symbolic-mystical action the redemptive acts of Christ, His self-offering on the Cross, glorious resurrection and sending of the Spirit.

By breaking with conventional approaches to the liturgy and retrieving a revitalised consciousness of the Christian *mysterium*, Casel's *Mysterienlehre* has greatly influenced contemporary understandings of the Eucharist. Although he emphasises the significance of the incarnation in his theology, he re-aligned theological consideration of the Eucharist to its centre, i.e. the Paschal Mystery. He is the first to move away from the scholastically inspired theology reflected in the manualist tradition. Hence, his theology served as a stimulus for other theologians to develop more dynamic theological treatments of the Eucharist. Such discourse now centred on the entire Paschal mystery, rather than, the incarnation and death of

²⁰¹ Aidan Kavanagh in his introduction to Odo Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, xi.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 68. A useful way to understand this point is to imagine a cubic object and begin to observe it from different positions. Here, it becomes clear that while the cubic object is being viewed from different stand points, it presents itself to the observer as the same cubic object but from a different point of view. Although the presence of the risen Jesus is not an object-like presence, the point being made is that the Mass, in particular the Eucharist which is the high-point of the Mass, points to the whole Paschal Mystery and each liturgical occasion presents but a different stand point from which this singular mystery is encountered, viewed and understood.

Christ. While Casel's work presents itself as an exemplar of the theological break with traditional theologies of the Eucharist some theologians, namely, Louis Bouyer and Edward Schillebeeckx suggest that certain aspects of his theology require further modification. Casel also recognised that his work required further development. However, the way in which theologians developed the themes and insights expounded by Casel in his mystical theology into a more coherent framework will be examined later in this chapter.

Before considering such theological developments, it is important that the encyclical letters *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943) and *Mediator Dei* (1947) are observed as they highlight the gradual acceptance of "mystery" at official Church levels concerning understandings of the liturgy and in particular the Eucharist. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Casel perceived his theology as having influenced *Mystici Corporis Christi*.²⁰³ These encyclicals present important milestones on the road taken by the liturgical renewal of the twentieth century. Both letters had a significant effect on treatments of the Eucharist prior to the Second Vatican Council and on the liturgical renewal expounded in Vatican II's *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

3.3. An Emerging Acceptance of Mystery

3.3.1. Mystici Corporis Christi (1943)

The Council of the Vatican (1869-70) was suspended due to the Franco Prussian war and as a result, the topic of the Church, her nature and function was perforce left in abeyance. While a preliminary constitution had been drafted by the Council a vote had not taken place. However, the Council's failure to give an official teaching on the Church did not cause interest in the topic to stagnate. Rather, enthusiasm for the matter began to grow and in the early twentieth century there was a longing for the topic to be revisited by those at official

²⁰³ See especially, Aidan Kavanagh in his introduction to Casel, "*The Mystery of Christian Worship*," vii-xi.

levels of the Church. Dom Theodore Wesseling draws attention to the faithful's growing attraction to the question in October of 1943. He states that, "... interest in the vital importance of the Church as a divinely founded community has become one of the most prominent interests in our socially preoccupied society."²⁰⁴ Pope Pius XII attributed the faithful's growing interest in the topic of the Church as a divinely founded community to three emerging influences: [1] a revitalised appreciation of the liturgy, [2] an increase in the frequentation of the holy Eucharist and [3] a spread of devotion of the Sacred Heart.²⁰⁵

It is important to highlight that Pope Pius XII did not voice immediate support for the liturgical movement and its developments.²⁰⁶ Instead, in the encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis Christi*, he warns the movement's key thinkers of a "spirituality that would smother the flame of individual response to the guidance of the Holy Spirit by ignoring the supremacy of the Church's own prayer for a superficial enthusiasm for the liturgy."²⁰⁷ He suggests, that if such spirituality is not avoided the movement would prevent itself from reaching its desired telos. To propose that the content of the Pope's encyclical letter was controversial would be to misinterpret the Pope's comments. Comprehending the Church as the unified mystical body of Christ was not a novel ecclesial vision. The doctrine of the Mystical Body had long since been expounded by the Patristic writers. In particular, St. Augustine's appreciation of the motif had been widely acknowledged by theologians prior to the Pius XII's encyclical.²⁰⁸ For instance, Pius XII's predecessors Pius IX, Pius X and Pius XI all reaffirm particular aspects of the doctrine. While the encyclical letter did not outline a new understanding of the Church,

²⁰⁴ Theodore Wesseling, "The Encyclical "Mystici Corporis Christi": Summary and Commentary," *Orationes Fratres XVII*, no. 12 (1943): 529.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ellard, "The Body of Christ Which Is the Church," 238. See also; Michael Connolly, "An Encyclical and a Centenary," *ibid.*, no. 855: 363-64.

²⁰⁷ Wesseling, "The Encyclical "Mystici Corporis Christi": Summary and Commentary," 237.

²⁰⁸ This point has been alluded to previously while discussing Casel's treatment of the liturgy which is firmly based in an understanding of the Church as the unified mystical body of the risen Christ. See especially, Ellard, "The Body of Christ Which Is the Church," 237.

it did revive an understanding of the Church that centred on mystery. The teaching is reflective of the theology of the Church Fathers and is firmly rooted in scripture, specifically Pauline, which is evidenced in the encyclical through its large quantity of biblical references referring to the writings of St Paul.

The doctrine of the Church as the mystical body of Christ provided a richer ecclesiological base for treatments of the Eucharist and of the sacraments in general. Although the teaching was widely known, the necessity for a fuller statement of the teaching of the mystical body, the faithful's most intimate union with Christ, emerged from particular tendencies that grew from rationalism, naturalism and false mysticism. Pius XII outlines that such tendencies had contributed to misunderstandings of the Church, her nature and function.²⁰⁹ In his encyclical, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, he states that:

... there still survives a false *rationalism*, which ridicules anything that transcends and defies the power of human genius, and which is accompanied by a cognate error, the so-called popular *naturalism*, which sees and wills to see in the Church nothing but a juridical and social union, there is on the other hand a false *mysticism* creeping in, which, in its attempt to eliminate the immovable frontier that separates creatures from their Creator, falsifies the Sacred Scriptures.²¹⁰

It was with this impetus that Pius XII reaffirmed the teaching of the mystical body for the faithful as to enrich and clarify the mystery which permeates the Church in all of her dimensions.

Charles Davis emphasises that “our understanding of the liturgy flows from our understanding of the Church.”²¹¹ From this point of view, comprehending the Church as the

²⁰⁹ Wesseling, "The Encyclical "Mystici Corporis Christi": Summary and Commentary," 530.

²¹⁰ *Mystici Corporis Christi*, n. 9. Hereafter cited as *M.C.C.*

²¹¹ Davis, *Liturgy and Doctrine: The Doctrinal Basis of the Liturgical Movement*, 47.

mystical body of the risen Christ has significant implications in relation to the way that we understand the Eucharistic celebration. The teaching of *Mystici Corporis* places the exalted Christ as the invisible head of the Church. As our high priest, the glorified Christ exercises His priesthood “through and with the Church.”²¹² Understanding the Church in this way marked a significant shift from the scholastic view of the Church as *Christus Solus* signifying ‘Christ alone, present in the ministry of the priest, and acting on behalf of the people’.²¹³ The encyclical’s teaching rediscovered the Augustinian image of *Christus Totus* ‘Christ in the midst of the Church, together with the Church which is gathered to Himself’.²¹⁴ Such an image makes clear that it is the mystery of the glorified *Kyrios* that is present in our midst when the faithful are gathered together as a community. It is here, gathered as His body that His Church enters into intimate union with Him under the motif of mystery.²¹⁵

The doctrine of the mystical body teaches that the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit are present at the centre of the Church. That it is the mystery of the risen Christ which is the organic whole that sustains the phenomenon of the Church in all its particularities. It is from this perspective, that modern theologians have developed more dynamic theologies of the Eucharist compared with those rigid theologies expounded in the neo-scholastic manualist tradition. By understanding the Church as the mystical body of the Christ it becomes clear that both the Eucharist and the Church are interdependent aspects of Christian life. In other words, the nature of the Church finds its truest expression in the communal celebration of the Eucharist. It is here in the gathered assembly that the Church is realised as the mystical body Christ and where our most intimate union with the risen Christ, now in his Spirit-filled existence, reaches its climax.

²¹² Davis, *Liturgy and Doctrine: The Doctrinal Basis of the Liturgical Movement*, 47.

²¹³ Ellard, "The Body of Christ Which Is the Church," 237-38.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ As has been mention above, this theological shift is also evident in Casel’s *Mysterienlehre*.

2.3.2. *The Eucharist as the Climax of our Mystical Union with the Risen Christ*

In his book *Corpus Mysticum*,²¹⁶ Henri de Lubac observes the intimate relationship that was consistently accentuated in Christian antiquity between the Eucharist and the Church. In particular, he claims that when this point is considered, the context of the Donatist controversy comes to mind as it is here that the link between the Eucharist and Church was giving significant force.²¹⁷ Similarly, he proposes that the Latin writers of the seventh, eighth and ninth century also emphasised this connection. For these writers the Eucharist, including St Augustine, stood to the Church as cause to effect, as sign to reality.²¹⁸

Such is the intimacy of this relationship that De Lubac highlights the swift transition evident in the texts of this period from “*sacrament to the power of the sacrament or from visible form to the reality itself.*”²¹⁹ In same vein as the tradition that had been handed down to him, Aquinas understood the *res* of the Eucharist as ‘the unity of the mystical body’.²²⁰ De Lubac claims that such a strong emphasis was placed on the Church in these texts that if, in a treatment of the mystery of the Eucharist the unqualified phrase ‘the mystical body’ is encountered, more often than not it was being used in reference to the Church rather than the Eucharist.²²¹ Pius XII distils this intrinsic relationship in *Mystici Corporis* through the emphasis placed on the gathered assembly.

²¹⁶ De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages Historical Survey*, 13.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Cecil McGarry, "The Eucharistic Celebration as the True Manifestation of the Church " in *Church & Eucharist*, ed. Michael Hurley S. J. (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son Limited, 1966), 28. See also; Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages Historical Survey*, 13.

²¹⁹ De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages Historical Survey*, 13-14.

²²⁰ B. C. Butler, *The Idea of the Church* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962), 8. Scholastic terminology such as ‘*res*’ denotes that the sacraments are three dimensional, for example, the Eucharist can be understood as a threefold reality: *sacramentum tantum* (the sacrament pure and simple), *res et sacramentum* (the sacrament-and-the-reality) and *res tantum* (the reality pure and simple).

²²¹ Ibid., 13.

In the Eucharistic celebration the true nature of the Church is actualised. When the faithful gather in Eucharistic action, the mystical body is acting as “...one bread, one body.”²²² St. Ildephonsus of Toledo (699), drawing on the Augustinian formulation, alludes to this in Chapter 137 of his *De cognitione baptismi* in relation to the affirmation of faith:

[W]hat is seen has bodily form; what is perceived mentally has spiritual fruit. Therefore if you want to grasp mentally the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle saying to the faithful, You are the body and members of Christ...Though many, we are one bread, one body.²²³

In *Mystici Corporis Christi* Pius XII emphasises that our most intimate union with Christ in His mystical body reaches its climax in the Eucharistic celebration. He writes that in the Eucharist, the faithful “...are nourished and strengthened...and by a divine, ineffable bond are united with each other and with the Divine Head of the whole Body.”²²⁴ By celebrating the Eucharist the faithful enter into deep relationship with the risen Christ.

The encyclical further develops the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist. Without passing over the distinction between the clergy and the laity Pius XII implicitly speaks of the active role of the worshipping community in the sacrifice of Christ to the Father. Understanding the Church as the mystical body of the glorified Christ suggests that it is not the priest alone who offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. Rather, it is the whole worshipping community that, in a certain way, offers the sacrifice of Christ to the Father in the Eucharistic celebration.²²⁵ In this context the uniqueness of Calvary is encountered, in that there “offerer and victim were not only closely connected, but simply fused into one, identified.”²²⁶ At the Crucifixion, the

²²² Augustine, *Sermo 272* (PL, 38, 1247). Augustine develops this formulation from St. Paul’s in 1 Cor 10, 17, that is, “Because the [Eucharistic] Bread is one, we Christians, multitude though we are, are one body, since we all partake of One Bread.”

²²³ PL, 96, 169 D.

²²⁴ *M.C.C.*, n. 19.

²²⁵ Ellard, “The Body of Christ Which Is the Church,” 241.

²²⁶ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 122.

Church did not co-offer that sacrifice together with Christ: instead, she was the beneficiary of Jesus' personal offering.²²⁷ Hence, according to Bermejo, as the Eucharistic sacrifice is an echo of Calvary "we can logically expect to find an ecclesial character on the altar similar to that already present on the Cross – but much more pronounced."²²⁸ Pius XII expounds the fact that here, in the celebration of Eucharist, the Church and its union with Christ truly manifests itself:

For in this Sacrifice the sacred minister acts as the viceregent not only of our Savior but of the whole Mystical Body and of each one of the faithful. In this act of Sacrifice through the hands of the priest, by whose word alone the Immaculate Lamb is present on the altar, the faithful themselves, united with him in prayer and desire, offer to the Eternal Father a most acceptable victim of praise and propitiation for the needs of the whole Church. And as the Divine Redeemer, when dying on the Cross, offered Himself to the Eternal Father as Head of the whole human race, so "in this clean oblation" He offers to the heavenly Father not only Himself as Head of the Church, but in Himself His mystical members also, since He holds them all, even those who are weak and ailing, in His most loving Heart.²²⁹

This formulation rediscovers the Church Fathers, specifically St. Augustine's, understanding of the function of sacrifice. Augustine claims that the purpose of the sacrifice of the altar is to "cling to God in holy fellowship."²³⁰ To celebrate the Eucharist is to be united with God through a self-commitment to Him expressed and symbolized in the victim offered. In the sacrifice of Calvary, Augustine perceives this ecclesial paradigm to be present in particular way. He writes:

²²⁷ This point rediscovers the Augustinian view of sacrifice outlined in his magisterial work *De Civitate Dei*. St Augustine emphasises that God does not benefit from our Eucharistic sacrifice. Rather, it is those who offer this most holy sacrifice that have all to gain. See especially, Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, X. 6.

²²⁸ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 122.

²²⁹ *M.C.C.*, n. 82.

²³⁰ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, X. 6.

He is the one true mediator who reconciles us to God through the sacrifice of peace, so that he remains one with him to whom he offered [God], he makes in himself those for whom he offered [the Church], he joins into one the offerer and the thing offered.²³¹

Bermejo further suggests that although present in a certain way on Calvary, it is specifically in the Eucharistic sacrifice that the eminence of the role of the Church reveals itself “both victimal and priestly.”²³² He highlights again the words of Augustine, “...the priest himself [Christ] is the offerer, He is the victim. And he wants a sign of it to be the very sacrifice of the Church, who, being the body of Him who is the head, knows how to offer herself through Him.”²³³ The Church, through that which she offers on the altar, also offers herself. Here, the fullness of the intrinsic relationship that flows betwixt and between the Eucharistic body and the ecclesial Body becomes apparent. Augustine emphasises the symbolic nature of the Eucharistic body. His understanding of the symbolic richness of the Eucharistic body is firmly rooted in the mystery of the risen Christ’s presence: “[F]or instead of all those sacrifices and offerings, his body is offered and given to the faithful.”²³⁴ For Augustine then the Eucharistic body of Jesus is the symbol of His ecclesial body. Bermejo proposes that the symbolic richness which Augustine distils and emphasises through the ecclesial motif of mystery is best presented by observing the offertory procession.

For Bermejo the practice of the offertory procession is rich in symbolic value.²³⁵ When understood in light of the relationship between the ecclesial body and the Eucharistic body and also the emphasis placed by Augustine on the significance of the symbolic, the offertory

²³¹ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, IX, 19.

²³² Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 126.

²³³ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, X, 20.

²³⁴ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XVII, 20, 2.

²³⁵ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 125. Bermejo emphasises that this point is significant. However he notes that its practice has come to be neglected because its usage has become somewhat mindless routine due to mechanical repetition which has essential eradicated the custom of its meaningful significance.

procession becomes rich in symbolic value. When the Eucharistic body of Christ is apprehended as being the symbol of His ecclesial body, i.e. if the Eucharistic body is perceived as the sign which points to the deeper dimension of the unity of the offering Church, incarnate now and present in the worshipping assembly, then the action of bringing the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine to the celebrant symbolizes her self-offering.²³⁶ These simple gifts, almost worthless in themselves, are the symbolic carries of the mystical body's self-surrender, her self-offering to the Father thus becomes endowed with an extraordinary rich symbolic value. Bermejo states that in this Eucharistic action "the Church offers something and in the course of the Eucharistic action this something will become the Somebody to be returned to her."²³⁷ This symbolic self-offering, through the gifts of bread and wine, is accepted by God, who in turn gives this gift back to the Church as a sign of His contentedness. The Father transforms these same gifts into the person of His Son. According to Bermejo, it is within this most beautiful dynamic action that we encounter "the Church's humble surrender and the Father's lavish munificence; the Church's gift of bread and the Father's gift of the Son; the ascending movement of the Church and the descending movement of the Father: both meet in the Eucharistic Jesus."²³⁸ This is the exceptional richness that can be uncovered when the offertory procession is more fully understood.

It is clear, therefore, that the Church makes the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church. They are so intimately interlocked that both stand to each other as cause and effect. Christ entrusted the Eucharist to the Church, and therefore, it is the Church not the individual Christian that is the recipient of the Eucharistic gift. This gift from Christ is utterly communitarian: it is the mystical body that celebrates the sacrificial memorial of Jesus' death and resurrection. By doing so she *makes* the Eucharist and makes sacramentally present the

²³⁶ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 125.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

entire *Sacramentum Paschale*. Hence, it is also true to say that the Eucharist *makes* the Church. In the New Testament the Eucharist is presented as being one of most integral and constitutive aspects of the local Church.²³⁹ There can be no Church without the Eucharist. It is the heart of the Church and from it the ecclesial body throbs with divine life.²⁴⁰ Without the Eucharist the Church would become, to utilise the word of Bermejo, “an emaciated body.”²⁴¹ The Eucharist also makes the Church in another way. By spreading divine life throughout the ecclesial Body, it unifies the Body. Here, we encounter the richest dimension of the Eucharistic mystery, “to symbolize *and effect* the internal unity of the Church.”²⁴² In this context the Eucharistic body, “consumed, interiorized and assimilated, increases the life and deepens the unity of the ecclesial Body.”²⁴³ The Eucharist unifies, nourishes and sustains the whole Church, the mystical body of the risen Christ: the Eucharist *makes* the Church.

3.3.3. A Brief Synopsis

Pius XII’s *Mystici Corporis Christi* rediscovered a more biblical and patristic view of the Church, one that is engrained in the mystery of Christ, and therefore, the teaching reaffirms the words of Augustine that “union between God and man is only possible through the mystery of Christ.”²⁴⁴ However, it could be proposed that the encyclical highlights a recurrent linguistic deficiency in relation to the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist. In the encyclical Christ is consistently referred to as suffering victim and only once does it say that He is the *glorified* victim rather than suffering victim. Furthermore, when Christ is referred to as glorified victim, it is not in reference to His Eucharistic mode of being but rather to his heavenly life. Such problematic language was also highlighted while analysing the dogmatic

²³⁹ Jerome Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament*, ed. Mary Ann Getty, Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament (Delaware: Michael Glazier Inc, 1988), 69-129.

²⁴⁰ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 126.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid., 126-127

²⁴³ Ibid., 127.

²⁴⁴ Noel O’ Sullivan, *Christ and Creation, Christology as the Key to Interpreting the Theology of Creation in the Works of Henri De Lubac* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 214.

manuals. Therefore, it is important to reaffirm here what has been outline above. If we are to say that it is the *risen, glorified, transfigured, exalted* Christ that is present in our Eucharistic celebrations, it follows that Jesus did not remain in death but was raised from the dead into eternal life by the Father. He is then no longer the suffering victim but the *glorified transfigured* victim. The suggestion that Christ is a suffering victim stems from a perception that through His death Jesus achieved salvation for humankind. Such a standpoint is missing an integral dimension of the redemptive process. Calvary is witness to both death *and* resurrection in an unbreakable unity.

To understand the Eucharistic sacrifice solely from the position of Jesus' death is to misinterpret not only the redemptive process, but also the way in which sacrifice functions. The Eucharistic sacrifice requires both offering and acceptance: as Christ offered Himself on the Cross, so too did God reveal His acceptance through His raising Jesus from the confines of death. If the Eucharistic sacrifice does not include both His death and glorification, then it is to impoverish the mystery being celebrated. However, it is important to draw attention to the revitalised appreciation of the Holy Spirit in the encyclical letter. Throughout the encyclical the Spirit is explicitly referred to 82 times. This development marks a significant shift in emphasis when compared to the theology of the neo-scholastic manuals which erroneously neglected the importance of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the encyclical, Pius XII emphasises that the Spirit permeates the Bridegroom in all of her vital dimensions and that it is the Spirit which stirs the hearts of humankind and draws persons into union with the risen Christ through His mystical body.²⁴⁵ This process of the Spirit culminates in the Eucharistic celebration.

With the encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis Christi*, Pius XII rediscovered an understanding of both the Church and its liturgy that centred on mystery. The encyclical letter enabled

²⁴⁵ *M.C.C*, n. 1.

theologians to address in a fuller manner the liturgy and the Eucharist by uncovering the inexhaustible richness that is contained in the Eucharistic mystery which permeates the Church. In *Mediator Dei* (1947) Pius XII gives a detailed treatment of both the liturgy and the Eucharist. His thought develops from the teaching of *Mystici Corporis Christi* and many perceived *Mediator Dei* as its second chapter.²⁴⁶ Hence, it is not surprising that the encyclical was considered by many theologians to be the liturgical charter prior to the liturgical renewal inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Therefore, the theological developments presented in *Mediator Dei* must be outlined and discussed as they had a significant effect on theologies of the Eucharist leading up to Vatican II and on the reforms implemented by the Council.

3.3.4. *Mediator Dei* (1947)

The significance of *Mediator Dei* can only be appreciated when it is observed within its historical context and understood as being inseparable from *Mystici Corporis Christi*. The encyclical *Mediator Dei* transformed the venture of the liturgical renewal. It gave the reform of the twentieth century official Catholic status. Prior to the encyclical, the liturgical reform was operating in scattered localities rather than as a coordinated and unified movement. Alcuin Reid emphasises this point. He states that “the relationship between the liturgical movement and the Holy See was consummated by the promulgation of Pius XII’s encyclical *Mediator Dei*.”²⁴⁷ Gerald Ellard also discerns, in his reading of the encyclical, that liturgical reform was no longer merely “a matter of choice but a *must*, an apostolate incumbent upon all.”²⁴⁸ However, some theologians disagreed. They fixed their attention, when reading the encyclical, on this or that point which in their eyes reflected a condemnatory view of the liturgical renewal. As Edward Long states “theirs is but one way of misreading the

²⁴⁶ Gerald Ellard, "At Mass with My Encyclical," *Orate Fratres* 22, no. 6 (1948): 241.

²⁴⁷ Reid, *The Organic Development of the Liturgy: The Principles of the Liturgical Reform and Their Relation to the Twentieth Century Liturgical Movement Prior to the Second Vatican Council*, 126.

²⁴⁸ Gerald Ellard, *The Mass of the Future* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1948), xi.

encyclical.”²⁴⁹ He suggests that “[T]he liturgical zealot on his side sought out every word of encouragement and approval for his own cherished ideas.”²⁵⁰ William Busch claims that the encyclical’s appearance was significant in view of the developments that preceded it, such as, Pius X’s call for the laity’s active participation in the sacred mysteries in his *Motu proprio* (1903) and Pius XII’s reaffirmation of the doctrine of the Mystical Body in *Mystici Corporis*.²⁵¹ Busch argues that “as did the initiatives of Leo IX in the eleventh century and of Paul III in the sixteenth”²⁵² *Mediator Dei* marked the beginning of a new stage rather than an end.²⁵³

While the liturgical movement had spread out in many directions *Mediator Dei* takes account of them all. It considers the “doctrinal, juridical and pastoral aspects of the liturgy, the right relations of official and private prayer...the spirit that should inform liturgical art in its many forms.”²⁵⁴ In particular, the encyclical gives significant attention to the pastoral aspect, the spirit and methods of the liturgical apostolate.²⁵⁵ In the encyclical, Pius XII gives a significant evaluation of the laity’s collaborating role in liturgical worship. Therefore, the doctrinal starting point of the *Mediator Dei* presents itself as a fuller evaluation of paragraph 82 of *Mystici Corporis*.²⁵⁶

Busch suggests that as the encyclical’s treatment of the liturgy develops from the teaching of *Mystici Corporis*, “dogma must be regarded not merely as static in the order of truth, but as

²⁴⁹ Edward Long, "The Background to Mediator Dei," *The Furrow* 1, no. 9 (1950): 447.

²⁵⁰ Long, "The Background to Mediator Dei," 447.

²⁵¹ Martin B. Hellriegel, "1947 Mediator Dei 1957," *Worship* 32, no. 1 (1957): 2-4.

²⁵² William Busch, "About the Encyclical Mediator Dei," *Orate Fratres* 22, no. 4 (1948): 156.

²⁵³ See especially, Josef Andreas Jungmann in his introduction to Herbert Vorgrimler, ed. *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 5 vols., vol. 1 (London: Burns & Oates Limited, 1967), 2. Here, Jungmann outlines the way in which *Mediator Dei* inspired theologians to engage with and reform the Easter liturgy.

²⁵⁴ Long, "The Background to Mediator Dei," 447.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ellard, "At Mass with My Encyclical," 241. See direct quotation of paragraph 82 above on p. 59.

operative in the order of life.”²⁵⁷ He expresses the hope that with *Mediator Dei* the meaning of the word ‘liturgy’ would be more richly understood and that liturgy as rubrics would be removed from popular thought.²⁵⁸ In a similar vein, Dom Bernard Capelle, stated that “the false notion which reduces the liturgy to a mere body, a code of ritual prescriptions, altogether external, is so persistent that it drives one to the point of losing patience.”²⁵⁹ However, with the promulgation of *Mediator Dei* the liturgy could no longer be apprehended in this manner.

Utilising the insights raised by theologians of the liturgy movement, Pius XII provides a definition of the liturgy.²⁶⁰ He highlights that an understanding of the liturgy is inseparable from an understanding of the Church:

[T]he sacred liturgy is, consequently, the public worship which our Redeemer as Head of the Church renders to the Father, as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its Founder, and through Him to the heavenly Father. It is, in short, the worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in the entirety of its Head and members.²⁶¹

From this definition, it is clear that the teaching of *Mediator Dei* concerns the inner meaning of the liturgy. Pius XII’s definition alludes to the importance of the laity’s active participation in the sacred mysteries, particularly in relation to the Eucharist. For him, the source of true Christian spirit flows from the crowning act of the sacred liturgy,²⁶² namely, the Eucharist.²⁶³ While Pius XII makes reference to the Eucharist throughout the encyclical, he gives it specific attention from paragraph 66 to 120, and unlike previous papal liturgical engagement

²⁵⁷ William Busch, "About the Encyclical *Mediator Dei*," *ibid.*, no. 4: 156.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ This statement by Dom Bernard Capelle is cited in William Busch, "About the Encyclical *Mediator Dei*," 156.

²⁶⁰ Davis, *Liturgy and Doctrine: The Doctrinal Basis of the Liturgical Movement*, 47.

²⁶¹ *Mediator Dei*, n. 20. Hereafter cited as *M.D.*

²⁶² William Heidt, "Scriptural Background of "*Mediator Dei*," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1950): 55.

²⁶³ *M.D.*, n. 66.

which concerned itself solely with the rubrics of worship, Pius XII gives fuller consideration to the *nature* of the liturgy and particularly the Eucharist. He emphasises that the Eucharist is the “fountain-head of genuine Christian devotion.”²⁶⁴ He proclaims that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a many-faceted reality and that it must not be understood only within the context of the sacred species.²⁶⁵

Along with the Church, therefore, her Divine Founder is present at every liturgical function:

[1] Christ is present at the august sacrifice of the altar both in the person of His minister and
[2] above all under the Eucharistic species. [3] He is present in the sacraments, infusing into them the power which makes them ready instruments of sanctification. [4] He is present, finally, prayer of praise and petition we direct to God, as it is written: "Where there are two or three gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20).²⁶⁶

It is important to observe the way in which Pius XII develops his understanding of the various modes of Christ's presence in the Eucharist as he perceives the climax of the Mass to be the commemorative sacrifice of Christ's death.²⁶⁷

3.3.5. *The Eucharist as the Commemorative Sacrifice of Christ's Death*

In Part II of *Mediator Dei*, Pius XII states that the Eucharistic sacrifice is best understood as a continuation of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. He emphasises that the Eucharistic sacrifice on the altar is not simply an “empty commemoration of the passion and death of Christ.”²⁶⁸ Rather, it is “a true and proper sacrifice, whereby the High Priest [Christ] by an unbloody immolation offers Himself a most acceptable victim to the Eternal Father, as He did upon the

²⁶⁴ *M.D.*, n. 5.

²⁶⁵ Michael G. Wiczak, "The Manifold Presence of Christ in the Liturgy," *Theological Studies* 59, no. 4 (1998): 684.

²⁶⁶ *M.D.*, n. 20

²⁶⁷ Rev. Frances J. Wengier, *The Eucharist-Sacrifice* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1955), 240-47.

²⁶⁸ *M.D.*, n. 68.

Cross.”²⁶⁹ Here, Pius XII reaffirms the teaching of the Council of Trent (1545-63) which explicitly states that the Eucharistic victim is “one and the same victim; the same person now offers it by the ministry of His priests, who then offered Himself on the Cross, the manner of offering alone being different.”²⁷⁰ Pius XII claims that in worship the minister in his priestly activity, in a certain manner, “lends his tongue, and gives his hand”²⁷¹ to Christ. In the Eucharistic sacrifice the priest is the same, Jesus Christ, whose Sacred Person His minister represents.²⁷² Briefly stated, by reason of his priestly ordination the minister is made like the High Priest and thus has the power of performing actions in virtue of Christ’s person.²⁷³

However, understanding the Eucharist as a proper sacrifice offered by Christ through the minister who represents Him does not imply that Christ offers Himself *anew* to God by the ministry of His priests.²⁷⁴ Rather, for Pius XII, the external signs of bread and wine in the Eucharist are symbols of “His death.”²⁷⁵ The Pope states that, “the commemorative representation of His death which actually took place on Calvary, is repeated in every sacrifice of the altar, seeing that Jesus Christ is symbolically shown by separate symbols to be in a state of victimhood.”²⁷⁶ In other words, Christ offers Himself to the Father not *anew* but *still*, here and now in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the altar under the Eucharistic species of bread and wine.

Pius XII evokes the mystical dimension of the Eucharistic sacrifice, claiming that this aspect cannot be over-emphasized as it is imperative that it is understood that “the Eucharistic sacrifice of its very nature is the unbloody immolation of the divine Victim, which is made

²⁶⁹ *M.D.*, n. 68.

²⁷⁰ Council of Trent, sess. 22, c. 2.

²⁷¹ Saint John Chrysostom, *In Joann. Hom.*, 86:4. Cited in the encyclical letter *Mediator Dei*, n. 69.

²⁷² *M.D.*, n. 69.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ Sean O’Riordan, “The Eucharist,” *The Furrow* 6, no. 5 (1955): 316-18.

²⁷⁵ *M.D.*, n. 70.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

manifest in a mystical manner by the separation of the sacred species and by their oblation to the eternal Father.”²⁷⁷ As has been observed when treating *Mystici Corporis*, the Eucharistic sacrifice is not offered by the Priest alone: the faithful also participate in a certain way in the offering. Pius XII gives this teaching further consideration in paragraphs 82 to 94 of *Mediator Dei*.

Here in *Mediator Dei*, Pius XII addresses paragraph 82 of *Mystici Corporis* in greater detail. While reaffirming its teaching he also makes clear that there is an important distinction to be upheld when speaking about the roles of both the minister and the laity in the Eucharistic offering. While it is correct to say that the faithful, in a unique way, also offer the sacrifice, it is in a different sense to that of the minister. Emphasising this point, he utilises the words of St Robert Bellarmine, “[T]he sacrifice is principally offered in the person of Christ. Thus the oblation that follows the consecration is an attestation that the whole Church consents in the oblation made by Christ, and offers it along with Him.”²⁷⁸ Pius XII explains that when one considers the rites and prayers of the Eucharistic sacrifice it becomes apparent that the sacrifice is offered by the minister “in company with the people.”²⁷⁹

This point finds much support in the prayer said by the priest following the oblation of the bread and wine: “[P]ray Brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to the God the Father Almighty.”²⁸⁰ Likewise, it can be discerned that the prayers under which the divine Victim is offered are customarily expressed in the plural “[F]or whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee ... [W]e therefore beseech thee, O Lord, to be appeased and to receive this offering our bounded duty, as also of thy whole household ... [W]e thy servants, as also the whole

²⁷⁷ *MD*, n. 115.

²⁷⁸ Saint Robert Bellarmine, *De Missa*, 1, c. 27. Cited by Pius XII in the encyclical letter *Mediator Dei*, n. 86.

²⁷⁹ *MD*, n. 87.

²⁸⁰ Roman Missal, Ordinary of the Mass.

people ... do offer unto thy most excellent majesty, of thine own gifts bestowed upon us, a pure victim, a holy victim, a spotless victim.”²⁸¹

Pius XII claims that the participation of laity in the Eucharistic sacrifice follows from the state of dignity to which they were raised in Baptism. It is by the ‘character’ imprinted on their souls through Baptism that calls them to give worship to God.²⁸² However, he states that when the exact meaning of the term ‘offer’ is understood as it relates to the Eucharistic sacrifice another important reason emerges as to why it is said that all Christians offer the sacrifice. Here, Pius XII observes the consecration of the Eucharistic symbols of bread and wine: when the priest performs the words of consecration, which are performed by him alone, the minister is not acting as the representative of the faithful but as the representative of Christ. Here, the priest places the divine Victim upon the altar and “offers it to God the Father as an oblation for the glory of the Blessed Trinity and for the good of the whole Church.”²⁸³ Pius XII claims that this is the point where the laity participate in the oblation, “understood in this limited sense, after their own fashion and in a twofold manner, namely, because they not only offer the sacrifice by the hands of the priest, but also, to a certain extent, in union with him.”²⁸⁴ Therefore, for Pius XII, the faithful offer the Eucharistic sacrifice by the hands of the minister by virtue of the fact that the priest at the altar, in offering a sacrifice in the name of *all* the members of the mystical body, represents the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ.

Pius XII states that the understanding that the faithful offer the sacrifice with the priest is not founded on the fact that they perform a liturgical rite. Rather, “it is based on the fact the people unite their hearts in praise, impetration, expiation and thanksgiving with prayers or

²⁸¹ Roman Missal, Canon of the Mass.

²⁸² *M.D.*, n. 88.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, n. 92.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

intention of the priest, even of the High Priest himself, so that in the one and same offering of the victim and according to a visible sacerdotal rite, they may be presented to God the Father.”²⁸⁵ Still, this does mean that there is no relationship between the external rite and the internal worship of the believer. Instead, “the external rite should, by its nature, signify the internal worship of the heart.”²⁸⁶ He claims that the sacrifice “of the New Law signifies that supreme worship by which the principal Offerer himself, who is Christ, and, in union with Him and through Him, all the members of the Mystical Body pay God the honor and reverence that are due to Him.”²⁸⁷ It is important to note that this point presents a clear break with classical discourse on the Eucharist.

From this analysis of the encyclicals, it is clear that a shift has emerged in the way that the Eucharistic sacrifice is understood. This presents itself not only in the way that Pius XII considers the Eucharistic sacrifice to be an *action*, but also by his rediscovery of the Eucharist as a principally theocentric rather than christocentric action. While the Eucharistic sacrifice can only be made acceptable to the Father through the risen Christ, the Eucharist must be understood as being worship that is directed primarily towards God. Pius XII makes this explicit stating that like Calvary, in the Eucharist “...the appointed ends are the same. The first of these is to give glory to the Heavenly Father.”²⁸⁸ Therefore, both *Mystici Corporis* and *Mediator Dei* make clear that it is in this Eucharistic sacrifice that the whole Church is united with its divine Head.²⁸⁹ In the Eucharist, the mystical body gives immortal praise to God through sacrifice.²⁹⁰ Hence, the Eucharistic sacrifice must be perceived as an act of thanksgiving. Pius XII reaffirms *Mystici Corporis* emphasis on Christ’s presence in the

²⁸⁵ *M.D.*, n. 93.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 93.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 71.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 72. The term Eucharist derives from the Greek term ‘*eucharistia*’ which means ‘thanksgiving’ or ‘to give thanks’. Therefore, the Eucharistic action of the mystical body is an act of thanksgiving to God the Father.

gathered assembly, "... in prayer of praise and petition we direct to God..."²⁹¹ Christ is present in our midst.²⁹²

Therefore, *Mediator Dei* and *Mystici Corporis* make explicit that Christ is present in a unique way when His mystical body gathers together in worship and this finds visual expression in the Eucharistic assembly through the laity's participation in the commemorative sacrifice of Christ's death. Following from this point, the Eucharist must then be understood as a multi-dimensional singular action. However, in *Mediator Dei*'s consideration of Christic presence it fails to develop His presence in the proclamation and explanation of the Word.²⁹³ Still, the encyclical does present a refreshing understanding of Christic presence in comparison to the manuals theologies of the Eucharist.

3.3.6. *The Beginning rather than the End*

Although *Mediator Dei* gives significant consideration to the Eucharistic celebration it falls short in its engagement and appreciation of the Paschal Mystery. Dom Gaillard also makes this point in his treatment of the encyclical. He suggests that while *Mediator Dei* does present and analyse all the elements of the Paschal Mystery at least materially it says nothing, formally speaking, about the *Sacramentum Paschale*, "[W]e must recognise in humility and reverence that it contains nothing, *formaliter loquendo*, about the Paschal Mystery."²⁹⁴ He states that Pius XII passes over the Easter Mystery itself in almost total silence:

[T]o be sure, all the elements of the Paschal Mystery are presented and analysed there: the priesthood of Christ and that of the Church, the sacrifice of Calvary and the work of Redemption, the Resurrection of the Lord the exemplary cause of the new life of grace, the Eucharistic memorial of the sacrifice of the Cross, the sacrament... Everything is there, *saltem*

²⁹¹ *M.D.*, n. 20.

²⁹² *Ibid.* See also, Witzak, "The Manifold Presence of Christ in the Liturgy," 683.

²⁹³ Witzak, "The Manifold Presence of Christ in the Liturgy," 684.

²⁹⁴ Jean Gaillard, "Essai D'un Bilan Doctrinal," *La mission-dieu* 67 (1961): 33.

materialiter. But the Easter Mystery itself, in its unity and indivisibility, in its theological, liturgical and spiritual energetic power, it is not even mentioned.²⁹⁵

Such poor engagement with the Easter events impoverishes the richness of the mystery being proclaimed and celebrated in liturgical worship, especially in relation to the Eucharistic celebration. It presents a theology of the Eucharist which develops from a one dimensional understanding of Calvary. This can be seen in the emphasis placed by Pius XII on Christ's death. He proposes that the Eucharist is best understood as the commemorative sacrifice of Christ's death, rather than, of His death *and* resurrection. The sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist takes such precedence that the Eucharist as an anamnesis of Christ's glorious death *and* resurrection is oddly muted. While the commemorative dimension is mentioned in the encyclical, it does not give a detailed analysis of how this aspect functions in the Eucharist.

While the *Mediator Dei* is inspired by scripture and the Fathers of the Church it still uses terminology in its treatment of the Eucharist which has a significant scholastic character. For example, Pius XII uses the term instrument continuously in reference to the Eucharist and to the sacraments in general. Such language communicates a somewhat limited view of the sacraments. The Fathers' reference to the sacraments as 'mysteries' and the language of scripture evokes in richer manner, the fact that the Paschal Mystery is central to the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. Here, it is clear that while the encyclical recognises that the Easter mystery is integral to an understanding of the liturgy, Casel's insights and the language of the mysteries which he uses have yet to be fully accepted by those at official Church levels.

Furthermore, there is an important linguistic development in relation to the Victimhood of Christ. On this point the encyclical, unlike the theology of the manuals, speaks of Christ as

²⁹⁵ Gaillard, "Essai D'un Bilan Doctrinal," 33. See also, Placid Murray, "*Christ in Our Midst: Christ in the Liturgy According to the New Constitution*," *The Furrow* 15, no. 5 (1964): 269.

the 'divine Victim' rather than the suffering Victim. Such reference to the Victimhood of Christ in the Eucharistic celebration is more receptive of His mode of presence now in His Spirit-filled existence. The use of such language communicates effectively that Christ is not the suffering Victim but the *divine, risen, exalted, transfigured* Victim in the context of the Eucharistic sacrifice. While *Mediator Dei* fall's short in its development of the Paschal Mystery it marked an important juncture in the liturgical renewal of the twentieth century. It offers the principles of true development and presents the doctrinal basis for what would be developed in *Sacrosanctum concilium*.²⁹⁶

From this standpoint, *Mediator Dei* is best understood as the beginning of a new stage rather than an end.²⁹⁷ This view can be supported in light of the reform of the Easter liturgy that followed its promulgation.²⁹⁸ Following theologians' reading of the encyclical a great deal of interest developed around refining and modifying the insights of Casel's theology. Writers such as Louis Bouyer and Edward Schillebeeckx engaged with Casel's theology in more comprehensive way and were encouraged by *Mediator Dei*'s official definition of the liturgy. Pius XII's definition relieved theologians from the overly rationalistic approach of the manualist tradition and enabled the development of dynamic theologies of the Eucharist that possessed a more phenomenological character. Such an approach helped to rediscover an understanding of the sacraments that not only reaffirmed them as mediators of grace, but also as points of encounter with the risen Christ.

²⁹⁶ Long, "The Background to *Mediator Dei*," 451.

²⁹⁷ Busch, "About the Encyclical *Mediator Dei*," 156.

²⁹⁸ In particular see, Louis Bouyer, *The Paschal Mystery: Meditations on the Last Three Days of Holy Week*, trans. Sister Mary Benoit (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1951). See also, Josef Andreas Jungmann's introduction to Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 2. Here, Jungmann outlines the way in which *Mediator Dei* inspired theologians to engage with and reform the Easter liturgy.

3.4. Refining and Modifying Casel's Mystical Theology

3.4.1 Louis Bouyer

In his book *Life and Liturgy*²⁹⁹ Louis Bouyer discusses and modifies Casel's mystical theology presented in 1932.³⁰⁰ Like Casel, Bouyer emphasises that the Church's liturgical worship is but a continuous celebration of the Easter mystery. He states that "...the sun, rising and setting daily, leaves in its wake an uninterrupted series of Eucharists; every Mass that is celebrated prolongs the Pasch."³⁰¹ For him, the affirmation of this point refutes any understanding of the Christian religion which presents it as being simply a doctrine. Rather, the affirmation of this statement implies quite the opposite. He claims that Christianity is:

...a fact, an action, and an action, not of the past, but of the present, where the past is recovered and the future draws near. Thus it embodies a mystery of faith, for it declares to us that each day makes our own the action that Another [Christ] accomplished long ago, the fruits of which we shall see only later in ourselves.³⁰²

Hence, Bouyer claims that the salvific action of Christ is made dramatically present in the Eucharist. He proposes that our Eucharistic action is embedded in the Paschal Mystery, it points out to us that "the Christian in the Church must die with Christ in order to rise with

²⁹⁹ Louis Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy* (London: Sheed and Ward Ltd, 1962). The first edition of this text was published in 1956.

³⁰⁰ It is important to note that Bouyer's treatment of Casel's theology was not something radically novel. Rather, Bouyer was merely following the example set forth by Casel's dearest follower Dom Viktor Warnach, O.S.B. Perhaps the most significant consideration of Casel's theology by Viktor Warnach can be found in his book *Agape*. Bouyer also notes this work at the beginning of his treatment of Casel's Mystical theology. See, Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 90. For Warnach's thorough analysis of Casel's theology, see, Dom Viktor Warnach, *Agape. Die Liebe Als Grundmotiv Der Neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1951), 481-651. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that even in a review of Warnach's *Agape* theologians' dismissal of Casel's theology is persistently expressed. For example, one such review refers to Casel's *Mysterium* theology as being both strange and intangible. See, Richard Kugelman, "Other Matter: A Review of *Agape: Die Liebe Als Grundmotiv Der Neutestamentlichen Theologie* by Viktor Warnach," *Theological Studies* 14, no. 4 (1953): 608-11.

³⁰¹ Bouyer, *The Paschal Mystery: Meditations on the Last Three Days of Holy Week*, xiii.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

Him.”³⁰³ This is the meaning of the Pasch, says Bouyer, which permeates the liturgy and the Eucharist. The Pasch is not simply commemoration it is “the cross and the empty tomb rendered actual.”³⁰⁴ While the Pasch is Christ, “who once died and rose from the dead, making us die in His death and raising us to His life,”³⁰⁵ Bouyer suggests that Christ no longer has to stretch Himself upon the Cross in order to rise from the tomb. Rather, “it is His mystical body, the Church, of which we are the members”³⁰⁶ that most do so. This mystery is central to Bouyer engagement with Casel’s theology. However, before we engage with his analysis of Casel’s theology it is important to make clear that, while Bouyer brings the problems of Casel’s theology to the fore he does not intend for Casel’s theology to be dismissed. Rather, he strengthens Casel’s argument by amending his understanding of the mystery religions and the connection made by Casel between them and the Christian mysteries.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that Irénée Henri Dalmais gives significant attention to Casel’s theology in his book *Introduction to the Liturgy*³⁰⁷ when considering the presence of the mystery of salvation in the Liturgy. Here, Dalmais relies heavily on Casel’s exposition of the way in which the mystery revealed in Christ is present not only in its effects in the liturgy.³⁰⁸ Similar to Bouyer, Dalmais highlights that there are problems with Casel’s treatment of the Hellenistic mysteries but he also suggest that difficulties arise in Casel’s theology when one considers the insufficient attention which he gives to the “proper role of the Holy Spirit in the actualization of the mystery of salvation, for not clarifying exactly how the Church actualizes the liturgy (and is actualized by it), and for a notion for a notion of

³⁰³ Bouyer, *The Paschal Mystery: Meditations on the Last Three Days of Holy Week*, xiv.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., xiii.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Irénée Henri Dalmais, *Introduction to the Liturgy*, trans. Rodger Capel (London: Geoffrey Chapman Ltd, 1961). See also, Dalmais, *La Doctrine Des Mystères' (Mysterienlehre) De Dom Casel*, 1.

³⁰⁸ Dalmais, *Introduction to the Liturgy*, 69-99. See also, Kevin Irwin, *Liturgical Theology: A Primer*, ed. Edward Foley, American Essays in Liturgy (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 19-21.

liturgical celebration that is independent of the felt needs and cultural context of the Church which celebrates.”³⁰⁹ Still, it must be said that, unlike many writers who avoided Casel’s work due to his understanding of the Hellenistic mysteries, Bouyer recovers the richness of Casel’s insight better than Dalmais by delving deeper into the heart of Casel’s mystical theology and reformulating Casel’s insights in his dynamic theology of the Word.³¹⁰

According to Bouyer there is one important aspect of Casel’s theology that requires modification. For him, the element that needs to be revisited is “the general view of the mystery religions which he [Casel] had accepted.”³¹¹ However, Bouyer does highlight that Casel himself was prepared to discard the view developed by the ‘comparative’ religion school³¹² on the pagan mysteries.³¹³ Bouyer suggests that Casel’s vulnerability on this point resulted, “not from any lack of depth or breath in his own thought, but rather from his magnanimity of mind, which made him accept too readily possible objections to his own position.”³¹⁴ However, he claims that it must be acknowledged that the way in which Casel apprehends the pagan mysteries is not tenable.³¹⁵ He states that scholars such as Wilhelm Boussett and Richard August Reitzenstein, writers with whom Casel was most familiar, described the pagan mysteries in such a way that in them “one could discover the whole

³⁰⁹ Irénée Henri Dalmais, "La Liturgie Célébration Du Mystère Du Salut," in *L'Église En Prière I. Principes De La Liturgie*, ed. A. G. Martimont (Paris: Desclee, 1983), 282-89.

³¹⁰ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 90.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² The comparative school was group of scholars that established itself within the area of the history of religions. This *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* consisted of important scholars such as Wilhelm Boussett, Hermann Gunkel and Richard August Reitzenstein. In their writings, these scholars proposed that Christian thought was significantly influenced by neighbouring cultures and beliefs. However, Bouyer argues that these writes described the pagan mysteries in terms not at all proper to them by attributing purely Christian notions to them.

³¹³ Prior to Casel’s theology the scholars of the comparative school utilised this theory of the pagan mysteries against Christianity. However, Casel in a convincing demonstration made quite clear that instead of working against Christianity their theory was in a better position to exalt Christianity rather than to discredit it.

³¹⁴ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 90.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

content of Christianity, as it were pre-fabricated in some way.”³¹⁶ He outlines that for the writers of the comparative school to describe the pagan mysteries in this manner depicts far too simple a picture as “the reality is rather different.”³¹⁷

Bouyer proposes that in reality it was not that the whole world flocked to these pagan mysteries, a position that was alluded to by the comparative school, but rather a situation in which these ancient mysteries “came out of their shrines to make contact with the whole world.”³¹⁸ He emphasises that in the context of the ancient mysteries the term ‘mystery’ did not refer to the myth, but from the first to the last of the ancient mysteries the term ‘mystery’ signified “the rite and nothing else.”³¹⁹ He makes clear that the term ‘mystery’ was not “...the divine history which was the oldest explanation of the rite and the first transformation of its original purpose into a higher one; nor was the ‘mystery’ the theologico-philosophical digressions which at a later date elevated the myth into a higher purer realm of thought.”³²⁰ On this point, Bouyer then asks: “...is there any ground for a true analogy between the Mystery of St. Paul, and the pagan mysteries?”³²¹

Similar to Casel, Bouyer observes the mysteriological language of St Paul and the way in which his use of the term ‘mystery’ was the key factor in bringing about the terms development in the writings of the early Fathers and of Christianity in general.³²² However, unlike Casel, Bouyer’s answer to the question just posed is no.³²³ He states that “[W]e can frankly say that the overwhelming evidence of all contemporary research answers ‘No’.”³²⁴ The ancient mysteries employed the term ‘mystery’ in reference to the rite alone and nothing

³¹⁶ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 91

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 92.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid., 93.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Bouyer, *The Paschal Mystery: Meditations on the Last Three Days of Holy Week*, xvii.

³²⁴ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 93.

else, thus, Bouyer claims that “nothing could be, in every detail, less like the Pauline Mystery.”³²⁵ He outlines that the Mystery which St Paul spoke of can be best observed in 1 Cor 2:7-12.

Bouyer claims that is clear in this verse that the Pauline Mystery refers to “a plan of God for the salvation of the world, which had been hidden in the depths of the divine wisdom, inaccessible to humankind until it was to be proclaimed to the whole world in the Gospel.”³²⁶ He states that it emerges upon first reading of this plan that, in itself, it is not linked to any form of rite. Rather, St Paul’s use of the term ‘mystery’ connects two keynotes of the Jewish tradition, both wisdom and revelation.³²⁷ Bouyer draws attention to the distinctive character of Israel’s wisdom compared to its neighbouring kingdoms of Egypt and Assyria, and to how its distinctiveness gave rise to an intimate relationship between wisdom and revelation that then later came to be taken up by St. Paul in his understanding of the Christian Mystery.³²⁸

³²⁵ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 93

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 94.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ Bouyer outlines that in both the kingdoms of Egypt and Assyria wisdom was “the practical art of leading and governing men, the art which was acquired in the ante-rooms of the king’s palace, handed on by the elder functionaries to their young colleagues as a wealth of considered experience.” (See especially, Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 94.) Furthermore, while this form of wisdom was brought to Israel with the institution of kingship, Bouyer highlights that with the Israelites it underwent a slow but radical change. The wisdom that the Israelites received from their neighbours was enculturated into the culture of Israel. The first distinctive aspect of the wisdom of Israel emerges in the way that the scribes or wise-men of Israel believed that their first obligation was to be guided by the fear of Yahweh. This aspect of the wisdom of Israel presents itself as the distinguishing factor between them and their neighbouring kingdoms. However, it did not take the scribes long to recognise that true wisdom must be considered a gift from God. This can be observed at the beginning of the reign of Solomon when he asks God for the gift of wisdom. (See especially 1 Kings 3:4-10; Here, Solomon asks Yahweh to give him the gift of wisdom to govern the people of Israel.) Bouyer highlights that the Israelites then began to speak and think that God alone was wise, wisdom became a kind of prophetic piety. However, Bouyer outlines that the destruction of the Israelite kingship deprived the concept of wisdom of its primitive earthly object. He states that “...the whole content of experience and mediation of that primitive wisdom...was then ordered, no longer to the human government of earthly matters.” Rather, wisdom now came to be spoken of by the Israelite as “God’s own deeply mysterious governance of all kingdoms.” (See, Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 94.) Bouyer suggests that at this point the concept of wisdom was ready for a significant change. He claims that humankind “came to despair of arriving at true wisdom by his own efforts, even if these efforts were sustained by God.” (*Ibid.*, 95.) Briefly stated, the Israelite could only hope and long for a “free revelation of wisdom through an act of condescension by God.” (*Ibid.*)

Bouyer states that in the Israelite tradition wisdom passes to revelation and that this can be observed in the Book of Daniel. He claims that this transition, where wisdom passes to revelation, is the basis for St. Paul's theology of the Christian mystery. He highlights that the Daniel 2:20-22 presents "the most striking passage which contains the entire vocabulary"³²⁹ of St Paul's formulation of the Christian mystery:

[M]ay the name of God be blessed for ever and ever, since wisdom and power are his alone. It is he who controls the procession of times and seasons, who makes and unmakes kings, who confers wisdom on the wise, and knowledge on those with discernment, who uncovers the depths and mysteries, who knows what lies in darkness; and light dwells with him (Dn 2:20-22).

And, we also read later in this verse:

[Y]our Majesty, on your bed your thoughts turned to what would happen in the future, and the Revealer of Mysteries disclosed to you what is to take place (Dn 2:29).

Here, Bouyer states that not only does the vocabulary of these passages connect wisdom and revelation so characteristically in St Paul's formulation, but rather the entire frame of thought.³³⁰ He outlines that the context of both the passage in the Book of Daniel and that of St Paul are the same, the problem being engaged with is the conduct of history. He states that each passage presupposes an "opposition between the way in which men, or created things in general, pretend to lead and make history, and the disconcerting and all powerful way in which God does so, bringing their plans to nothing and accomplishing His own unchanging plan."³³¹ Hence, the Mystery is the key to this secret way of God planned by His own *wisdom*. However, it is only by his *revelation* to humankind that something of His secret can

³²⁹ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 94.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid.

be known. Such an understanding of the Christian Mystery becomes apparent when we read St Paul's letter to the Corinthians "[T]he message of the Cross is folly for those who are on the way to ruin, but for those of us who are on the road to salvation it is the power of God (1 Cor 1:18)." For St Paul the great Mystery now, through which all the partial mysteries are disclosed, "in which the conflict of the two wisdoms reaches its climax, is the Cross of Jesus."³³² The 'foolishness wiser than humankind' is precisely as St Paul states it, 'the preaching of the Cross'.³³³ Bouyer states that unlike the ancient mysteries "...from its first appearance on, the Mystery will always refer, in St. Paul's epistles, to these same things."³³⁴ Therefore, when the elements of St Paul's thought on the Christian Mystery are gathered together, it is clear that the Mystery as St Paul's understands it can be articulated as follows:

[I]t is the Cross, but the Cross seen as the climax of human history, inasmuch as God's wisdom devised it as the solution of the problems of human history. The Mystery is the Cross also inasmuch as through it, in His Son's blood, God reconciles in the body of Jesus all men, who are brought together to make one body, the Church.³³⁵

Here, Bouyer suggests that the in teachings of St. Paul the Mystery brings the fallen history of humankind with its telos of definitive death to a joyful conclusion. In other words, through Christ's death the telos of human existence has been radically transformed into one which reaches its climax in eternal life with the risen Christ. For Bouyer, this conclusion was only possible, according to St Paul's apprehension of the Mystery, by the fact that "the life and the victory have been won by means of death itself ... [I]t is precisely because Christ has undergone death that He is, the Saviour of humankind."³³⁶

³³² Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 95.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid., 96.

³³⁵ Ibid., 97.

³³⁶ Ibid.

Bouyer claims that this point presents the crucial difference between the Pauline idea of the Christian mystery and the Hellenistic mysteries. For St Paul, the Mystery is “a realization in history of a creative and redemptive plan of God, through which, once for all and definitively, everything is changed in humankind itself and in the whole ‘kosmos’, and history itself is thus brought to an end.”³³⁷ Such an understanding of mystery is not found anywhere in the Hellenistic mysteries. Bouyer states that the ancient mysteries “merely intended to associate man with the cyclical law of the visible world, with unvarying succession of death and birth, new death and new birth.”³³⁸ He claims these rites were merely shadows, “[O]ne day shadows and symbols disappeared because the reality had come.”³³⁹

For Bouyer, the connection made by Casel between the Pauline concept of Mystery and that of the Hellenistic mysteries makes little sense when it is reconsidered in light of recent developments in biblical scholarship and in the study of religions.³⁴⁰ Still, it is important to remember that the problems presented by Casel’s theology do not imply that it should be dismissed. Rather the issues raised by Bouyer necessitate the reformulation of Casel’s insights. Bouyer presents this appraisal of Casel’s insights in his dynamic theology of the Word of God and it is here that Casel’s insights emerge in a clearer and more established way.

Bouyer suggests that the Christian mystery is the perfect disclosure “through the self-revelation of God’s own Word, of the divine wisdom unattainable to humankind.”³⁴¹ He

³³⁷ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 98.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Bouyer, *The Paschal Mystery: Meditations on the Last Three Days of Holy Week*, xix.

³⁴⁰ For a rich and concise presentation of such scholarship, see especially, Nathan Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist* (Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 2000), 32-80. Here, Mitchell gives a thorough presentation of the impact that twentieth-century approaches to scripture had upon understandings of the connection between Jesus Christ and the Eucharist, particularly in relation to His real presence in the Eucharistic celebration.

³⁴¹ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 101. Here, it is significant to highlight that Bouyer is emphasising that the Mystery first of all lies in the abyss of God. See, Ephesians 3:10 and Colossians 2:2-3.

claims that this Mystery is “the great creative act of God alone, the act that baffles all humankind’s suppositions and expectations.”³⁴² Thus, he emphasises that the divine Mystery must be seen as the fulfilment of the fundamental need of humankind. For him, the paschal liturgy is a witness to this truth. He suggests that “it has been able to borrow from human mysteries the symbolism of their rites,”³⁴³ and yet, “its own mystery owes them nothing but gives them all their meaning.”³⁴⁴ It is only possible to understand the Paschal Mystery in this way when the Mystery itself is seen as being principally the supreme grace of God. For Bouyer, the Mystery must initially be considered under the form that St Paul has so rightly designated it, as “a mystery which is the supreme *revelation* of divine *wisdom*...God’s Word *par excellence*.”³⁴⁵ By approaching the Paschal Mystery in this way, Bouyer brings the important theological and historical insights of Casel to the fore in more coherent and developed manner.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Casel’s theology for Bouyer is the emphasis that he placed on concept of the image, the ‘*eikon*’,³⁴⁶ as a “true participation in the very reality of that of which it is the *eikon*.”³⁴⁷ Bouyer highlights that the importance of this concept in early Christianity does not find its genesis simply in the fact that the thought of Church Fathers possessed a significant Platonic character. Rather, he claims that the term was also important to St Paul himself.³⁴⁸ This can be observed in 1 Cor 16:49, “...as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so we shall bear the likeness of the heavenly one.” And, again in 2 Cor 3:18 and 2 Cor 4:4 we read of “...the glory of Christ, who is the *image* of God” and that we “...are being transformed into the *image* that we reflect in brighter and brighter glory; this is

³⁴² Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 101.

³⁴³ Bouyer, *The Paschal Mystery: Meditations on the Last Three Days of Holy Week*, xx.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 102.

³⁴⁶ On this point attention should be given to the fact that the term *eikon* is used by St Paul, whereas, the term *eidos* is utilised by the Fathers of the Church.

³⁴⁷ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 103.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

the working of the Lord who is the Spirit.” Interestingly in Ephesians and Colossians St Paul states that the Mystery is “one with Christ himself”³⁴⁹ and that Christ is the “fullness, the plenitude, *to pleroma*.”³⁵⁰ From this it can be discerned that the importance of *eikon* for St Paul, and later for Casel, is intimately linked with the idea of the *pleroma*. For St Paul the concept of the *pleroma* accentuates the link between God’s revelation of Himself in the Mystery; “[C]hrist is the fullness, and in Himself He reveals the fullness of what God intended to make of His creation.”³⁵¹ This *fullness* is “that of God’s work...the perfection of God’s one and whole design. But it is also the ‘fullness’ of God Himself.”³⁵² Bouyer brings this connection to the surface in his theology of the Word by reaffirming Casel’s hypothesis that “in some higher sense from which all other senses are derived, the Mystery is God Himself, God as He is in the inner-most depths of His being and as He is revealed to us in Christ.”³⁵³ Yet, in what way are we to understand this affirmation?

For St Paul, our knowledge of God is radically different following God’s perfect revelation in Christ and His Cross. For Bouyer, this distinction is important as we have come to know “His love, His *agape*”³⁵⁴ in the Cross. For St. Paul, in the Cross it is revealed that the divine *agape*

³⁴⁹ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 102.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 104. In 1 Cor 13, Paul contrasts divine love with mere human love. Here, Paul brings together the three most integral aspects of Christian life: faith, hope and love. Paul places significantly more emphasis on love, highlighting that of the three of them “the greatest of them is love (1 Cor 13).” See Rm 5:7-9. Yet, his most profound contemplation on this point emerges in his comparison of the divine *agape* with the celestial *eros* of Platonism.³⁵⁴ The Platonic concept of celestial *eros* was distinguished from, and was in opposition with, terrestrial *eros* as it did not long for material or sensual things. Rather, celestial *eros* possessed only a desire for celestial realities. However, here is where the important difference lies between the divine *agape* and the Platonic celestial *eros*. In the context of celestial *eros* the gods who had already come to possess their fullness and now want for nothing can only stir us when they are loved by us. However, in the Cross the divine *agape* reveals to humankind that God loves sinners. Such an idea would have no place in the thought of Plato. Hence, the divine *agape* must be apprehended as pure gift “the absolute gift of the creative God.” See especially, Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 104.

does not patiently wait for humankind to merit its fruitfulness.³⁵⁵ Unlike human love, it is a “purely generous and creative love.”³⁵⁶ In fact, the divine agape makes us good by loving us. For Bouyer this is the “great revelation of the New Testament.”³⁵⁷ Here, the words of St John enrich the teaching of St. Paul, “[L]ove consists in this: it is not we who loved God, but God who loved us and sent his Son to expiate our sins (1 Jn 4:10)... God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him (1 Jn 4:16).” Bouyer suggests that these phrases underscore the entire symphony of St. Paul’s thought, “St. Paul identifies the Mystery with Christ Himself, St. John identifies Christ with God’s Word.”³⁵⁸ However, Bouyer states that the resurrection must be seen as the climax of the divine agape. O’Collins also highlights this point, “[E]aster first happened through the freedom of God’s love and will never cease to invite the free, life-long commitment of our love.”³⁵⁹ Christ’s resurrection presents the crowning act of the divine agape as it transcends any rational explanation that is to be readily understood by our minds, it is the pinnacle of the Mystery which invites us into a relationship of reciprocal love with God who loved us first.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁵ Fernand Prat, *The Theology of Saint Paul*, trans. John L. Stoddard, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Dublin: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd, 1945), 119-26. Here, Fernand Prat gives a detailed account of Paul’s understanding of the divine *agape* and its relation to the Eucharistic celebration.

³⁵⁶ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 104.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

³⁵⁹ Gerald O’Collins, “Christ’s Resurrection as Mystery of Love,” *The Heythrop Journal* 25, no. 1 (1984): 50. See also; “Love Conquers All,” *The Furrow* 47, no. 4 (1996): 223-25.

³⁶⁰ Here, it is important to highlight that Hans Urs von Balthasar has also made a significant effort to bring the richness of the Paschal Mystery to theologian’s attention. Of central concern for von Balthasar is one’s openness and receptivity to the mystery of the triune God revealed in Christ. This receptivity has a rather aesthetic character. He emphasises that, similar to the manner in which one can become captivated by a piece of art, the believer too should become captivated by the Christian mystery. Hence, he is extremely critical of the way in which theology and spiritual have separated since the late-medieval period. For him, it is in the Paschal Mystery that Christ’s self-surrender and obedience is expressed most fully. Here, his notion of radical solidarity with Christ reaches its climax in his highly original, yet controversial, theology of Holy Saturday. For Balthasar, Easter Saturday is central to an understanding of the Paschal Mystery – the time Christ lay dead in the tomb in passive silence and descended into hell [as the creed of Nice suggests]. However, he argues that there are little biblical sources surrounding His descent into hell. Unlike the traditional portrayal of a triumphant opening of the gates of hell, von Balthasar claims that hell is not a place. Rather, it is ‘no-where’, chaos, a state of sin and total separation from God who is the source of all life. For him, hell is a state of complete alienation from God, ‘the

Bouyer states that the Mystery is the Word of God in its one and entire fullness, it is Jesus Christ Himself:

Christ is seen as producing in His coming to us the great event of Human history, as being in His person the great intervention of God in history, as being the recapitulation, that is to say, the new beginning and also the definitive summing-up of that history.³⁶¹

Understanding of the Pauline Mystery in this way, he claims that the Word of God is a *fact*. For him, the Word of God is the most creative fact of all history, “it is the fact in which the great reality of divine life, that is, divine love, as it were invades our own human life.”³⁶² Here, an important distinction emerges between the word of man and God’s Word. Bouyer states that, “when God says something He also does it: He does it by the very fact that He says it. In Him saying and doing is one and the same thing.”³⁶³ Thus, there is an intimate relationship between Word and action. For Bouyer the love of God, which He is in Himself, shows to us that deed and word are the same.³⁶⁴ The coming of Christ must be understood then as the final “utterance of what God intended to say and as the final realization of what

condition of the self-enclosed ‘I’, the ‘I’ unliberated by God. It is absence of faith, love and hope. Hence, to experience hell, says Balthasar, is to experience the full weight of abandonment and rejection which Christ experienced both on the Cross and in the tomb. According to Balthasar, here is where we enter into radical solidarity with Christ as “the sin of the world has been ‘laid’ upon Him, Jesus no longer distinguishes Himself and His fate from those of sinners.” Here, Balthasar conveys the notion of radical solidarity in such a way that it communicates both Christ’s radical absence and emphatic personal presence with believers. The community of believers in the Paschal Mystery walk with Christ to His cross and walk down from the Cross to His tomb in solidarity. Hence, in the Paschal Mystery, especially on Easter Saturday, mediates Christ’s solidarity with and presence in the community in the time of His absence. See especially, Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. O.P. Aidan Nichols (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 199-81; Declan Marmion and Rik van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to the Trinity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 176-85.

³⁶¹ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 105. See also; Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 106; *Myth and Reality*, 10. Here, Eliade provides some interesting insights in relation to the intervention of the Divine in history. Furthermore, he explains that by virtue of this intervention *homo religiosus*, by ritualistic action, participates in this transcendent reality.

³⁶² Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 105.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 106.

He intended to do.”³⁶⁵ To put this in another way, “Christ Himself is the Word of God, His creative Word, Whose power is nowhere shown as fully as it is in the Cross.”³⁶⁶

For Bouyer, the liturgy “makes us hear God’s Word in Christ, and it makes us experience in our own lives the power of that Word of God shown forth in the Cross.”³⁶⁷ He claims that it is only when this point is recognised that the true meaning of the Church and its liturgy emerges. He emphasises that Christ is present in the Eucharist through the Word of God, as He is Himself the Word made flesh.³⁶⁸ For him, the fundamental *leitourgia* of the Church is the “the permanent proclamation, the *kerugma* of the Mystery, through the ever living and acting Word which is always present in its apostles as God is present in It.”³⁶⁹ The Mystery is a *personal* love that longs to communicate itself to humankind. This is the Mystery that is present in the Church’s liturgy and it is the Word Himself that it mediates. Hence, for Bouyer the sacramental words pronounced in the liturgy amidst the Assembly of God’s People, here and now, proclaim the conclusion to the “whole disclosure of God’s Word which culminates in the Gospel.”³⁷⁰ For him, it is like “the coming of that same Word in Christ to Israel in the fullness of times.”³⁷¹ Thus, he states that the sacramental words pronounced in the Mass are:

..the living Word of God proclaimed to the faith of the Church by the apostolic ministry of the Church; but they are the one and whole fullness of the Word revealing itself as Deed, as Being, – in Christ ‘the same yesterday, today and forever,’ in His Cross which is permanently planted in the earth of our world like the ‘tree of life ... for healing all nations (Rev 22:2).’³⁷²

³⁶⁵ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 105.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁸ See especially, John 1:1-18.

³⁶⁹ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 108. Here, it is important to understand that Bouyer does not mean to imply that the Mystery is only Word in so far as for humankind word can be in opposition to ‘deed’ or ‘being’.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 110.

Bouyer claims that all Christian liturgy should be enriched and unified by a fuller understanding of the Word of God and should emphasise the “hearing of God’s Word by God’s People,”³⁷³ that is, “the heralding to the faithful assembled in Christ of the saving Mystery of Christ.”³⁷⁴

By reformulating Casel’s theological and historical insights Bouyer developed a more coherent understanding of the Paschal Mystery in its relation to the Church’s liturgy and the Eucharist. His theology presents a fresh understanding of Christ’s presence in the liturgy through its emphasis on Christ’s presence in the Word which is passed over by *Mediator Dei* in total silence. At this point it is important that consideration is given to the writings of Edward Schillebeeckx who develops our understanding of Christ’s presence further. Schillebeeckx develops a magisterial theology of the sacraments by both engaging with the writings of Casel and with the insights of phenomenological anthropology. By doing so, his theology of the sacraments exerted significant influence on the liturgical reform of the Vatican II and on theologies of the Eucharist that developed after it.

3.4.2. *Edward Schillebeeckx*

Denis O’Callaghan highlights that the general acceptance of Casel’s theology by Vatican II owes much credit to the writings of Edward Schillebeeckx.³⁷⁵ Throughout his career Schillebeeckx gave serious attention to the way that the Church relates to the world, areas which he designates as the mystical and the political. Central to his understanding of this relationship is his presentation of the sacraments as encounters with the risen Christ.³⁷⁶ In his

³⁷³ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 114.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ O’Callaghan, “Dom Odo Casel and the Mystery of Christian Worship,” 32. In fact, O’Callaghan states that Schillebeeckx’s *Christ, the Sacrament of God* serves as an excellent introduction to Casel’s theological insight.

³⁷⁶ Robert J. Schreier, “Edward Schillebeeckx,” in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David F. Ford (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Inc, 1990), 160.

book *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*,³⁷⁷ Schillebeeckx developed a theology of the sacraments that moved away from the Scholastic mechanistic models for approaching grace and the Church's sacramental life.³⁷⁸ However, rather than totally dismissing the concepts of Scholastic theology he "rediscovers, as it were from within, the notions forged by scholastic theology."³⁷⁹

Although his theology does possess a certain Thomistic character, Schillebeeckx did not consider himself or his writings to be Thomist. In an interview with Eric Luijten of the Thomas Instituute te Utrecht (Tilburg University) in 1983, Schillebeeckx outlines the way in which he uses the thought of Aquinas: "[T]homas kept playing an important role in my work ... more as a kind of touchstone; someone you cannot ignore, and who keeps you from making stupid mistakes."³⁸⁰ It is important to highlight that in this interview Schillebeeckx also makes a clear statement against neo-Thomism for its lack of engagement with human experience, "[I]n general, the post-Thomistic scholastic theology is not enough related to human experiences. Therefore their concepts tend to become almost eternal concepts."³⁸¹ Like Casel, Schillebeeckx strove to move away from such theology and came to rediscover a way of understanding the sacraments, and in particular the Eucharist, that was embedded in scripture and the theology of the early Fathers.³⁸² Still, Robert J. Schreiter highlights that no other twentieth century theology has ranged so widely over philosophical territory than

³⁷⁷ Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, trans. Cornelius Ernst (London: Sheed and Ward Ltd, 1966).

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁷⁹ Fr. B. D. Dupuy, "Théologie De L'histoire," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 47 (1963): 297.

³⁸⁰ Edward Schillebeeckx, interview by Eric Luijten, 1983. See Bibliography for further details.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

³⁸² See especially, Edward Schillebeeckx, *De Sacramentele Heilseconomie : Theologische Bezinning Op. S. Thomas' Sacramentenleer in Het Licht Van De Traditie En Van De Hedendaagse Sacramentsproblematiek* (Antwerpen: H. Nelissen, 1952). Also, a very useful study of this book may be found in Dom J. Gaillard, "Chronique De Liturgie," *Revue Thomiste* 57 (1957): 510-51.

Schillebeeckx, expert perhaps for Wolfhart Pannenberg.³⁸³ Cornelius Ernst also makes this point. He claims that the originality of Schillebeeckx's theology can be truly appreciated when his "anthropological insight into the sacraments"³⁸⁴ is observed. He suggests that Schillebeeckx "found theologically fruitful the work of such writers on phenomenological anthropology as Merleau-Ponty, Buytendijk and Binswanger."³⁸⁵

While Schillebeeckx did find these writers useful he did not perceive their work as providing ready-made theological categories of explanation. Rather, he emphasised that through the insights of these writers it was possible to "enlarge our understanding of the properly human already given in our experience, and in a theological context, to allow this enlarged understanding to be taken up into our human experience as Christians."³⁸⁶ Ernst emphasises the importance of this perspective for theological reflection on the Church and its sacraments. He highlights that prior to phenomenological philosophy it appears to be true even of scholastic epistemology that all knowledge was conceived of on the model of our knowledge of things, that is, physical realities.³⁸⁷ However, following the philosophical

³⁸³ Schreiter, "Edward Schillebeeckx," 154-55.

³⁸⁴ Cornelius Ernst in his forward to Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, xiv-xv. Here, the term 'anthropology' refers to a general doctrine of humankind that possesses a significantly more phenomenological character rather than a metaphysical one. Phenomenology is the study of "phenomena": appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, therefore, the meanings things have in our experience. Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view. Hence, it must be distinguished from other philosophical disciplines such as ontology (the study of being or what is) and epistemology (the study of knowledge).

³⁸⁵ Cornelius Ernst in his forward to Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, xiv-xv. See, Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge, 2002). See also, F. J. J. Buytendijk, *Phénoménologie De La Rencontre*, trans. Jean Knapp (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952). And this interesting study; Van Haecht Louis, "F. J. J. Buytendijk, Phénoménologie De La Rencontre," *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* (1952). Furthermore, to the best of this authors' knowledge the only writings available to the English reader of Binswanger are available in the collective volume; May Rollo, Ernest Angel, and Henri Ellenberger, eds., *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1958). Perhaps, the most significant of these writers for Schillebeeckx study Christ, the sacrament of encounter with God is Buytendijk's study of 'encounter'.

³⁸⁶ Cornelius Ernst's forward to Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, xv.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, xvi.

insights of Ludwig Wittgenstein³⁸⁸ and phenomenology this philosophical perspective was abandoned.

This break with traditional theological discourse enabled Schillebeeckx to allow the insights of phenomenology to enrich his theology.³⁸⁹ This influence can even be seen in his use of the term ‘encounter’ in the title of his book *Christ, the Sacrament of Encounter with God*. The term ‘encounter’ in the writings of Schillebeeckx does not operate simply as a “mode-word,”³⁹⁰ it signifies an idea that has received careful analysis. If we are to understand what is that Schillebeeckx means by ‘encounter’ it is important to make clear that it would be to misinterpret phenomenological philosophy to suggest that it is always a *personalism* which merely substitutes knowledge of things or facts with human relationships.³⁹¹ Rather, it would be more appropriate to suggest that as the personal existent and the structure of his existence engage philosophical interest centrally in phenomenology, “knowledge of things” is best understood as being a derivative of a fundamental being-in-the-world.³⁹² Now, ‘encounter’

³⁸⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. Charles Kay Ogden (London: Routledge, 1990), originally published in 1922. See also; *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, ed. C. Barrett (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1978).

³⁸⁹ Here, it is interesting to mention the writings of the German Protestant theologian Rudolf Otto. In his theology Otto utilises the rich insights of phenomenology especially in relation to Christian worship. Otto relied heavily on the insight of Friedrich Schleiermacher and emphasised that religion could not be reduced to a mere feeling or intuition. For Otto, religion does not just present a mass of metaphysical and moral fragments. Rather, it is an irreducible and unique reality. In Christian worship, says Otto, believers experience the ‘wholly Other’ it is a numinous encounter with the risen Christ. By developing a theology which is better related with human experience Otto’s theology, like Schleiermacher, stood in sharp contrast with the overly rationalistic philosophy of his time. See in particular; Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958). See also; Mircea Eliade, ed. *Rudolf Otto*, vol. II, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987).

³⁹⁰ See especially, Edward Schillebeeckx, “De Zin Van Het Mens-Zijn Van Jesus, De Christus,” *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 2 (1962): 128. Here, Schillebeeckx outlines that ‘encounter’ has become a *modeword*, an ‘existentialist slogan’. He goes on to highlight that it is a merely a modern term for a reality always acknowledged in religious life: ‘the *theological*, personal relationship to God in virtue of grace’ [p. 128]. Furthermore, this is also a strong example of Schillebeeckx’s re-creation of the original sense of a scholastic theological idea by way of a grasp of the reality it was intended to ‘fix’, the grasp itself trained by exercise in non-scholastic, phenomenological analysis [Ernst, p. xvii].

³⁹¹ The nearest possible approach to this oversimplification can be observed in the writings of Gabriel Marcel. See for example; Emmanuel Levinas, “Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel and Philosophy,” in *Outside the Subject* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

³⁹² Cornelius Ernst in his forward to Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, xvi.

can be apprehended as a fundamental mode of existence for the human existent, a structural possibility inherent in it.³⁹³

If we choose to treat each other as physical objects or mechanisms, it is to choose to mistreat one another. Here, Ernst claims that this “the misuse, the deficiency, throws light on that preordained openness to our fellows which releases our being into the fellowship of a *we*.”³⁹⁴ Thus, our *bodily* presence to each other is integral to ‘encounter’, “we may smile at each other or make our faces into masks, give ourselves to each other or withhold ourselves.”³⁹⁵ As is the case in any given culture, there are conventions which mould the styles of this bodily encounter. Hence there is also ritual idiom, “continuous with the ceremonial of secular life, which shapes the styles of liturgical encounter with God –e.g. kneeling.”³⁹⁶ From this standpoint, it becomes clear that ‘encounter’ as it appears in Schillebeeckx’s theological application of it, presents itself as a linguistic term that is fitting to the Christian religion by virtue of God’s personal gift to humankind which has been consummating in the Incarnation; God addressing human beings as a human person amongst humankind.³⁹⁷

Furthermore, Ernst suggests that the real merit and value of this idea [encounter] for theology is the “generality of its scope, its power to unify.”³⁹⁸ Therefore, Schillebeeckx’s treatise on the sacraments is far removed from the narrowly conceived theologies of the manualist writers where the sacraments were treated in “isolation from the rest of Christian and human experience, either as matter for specialists or as the object of a purely liturgical enthusiasm.”³⁹⁹ For him, the Christian religion must be understood as an encounter between God and humankind in Christ who is the primordial sacrament. This is the fundamental

³⁹³ Cornelius Ernst in his forward to Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, xvi.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, xvi-xvii.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, xvii.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, xvii, 1-2.

principle of his theology and it is only when this point is recognised that it becomes clear that the sacraments should not be separated from “the whole economy of revelation in word and reality, a revelation of God in Trinity, of Incarnation, grace, the Church and indeed man and his destiny,”⁴⁰⁰ as it is only within ‘the economy of sacramental encounter’ that humankind can achieve the fullness of personal being.

Schillebeeckx’s emphasises that human experience is the vehicle through which divine revelation is communicated, and therefore, divine revelation and human experience should never be contrasted. According to Schreiter, here ‘experience’ is understood as “wider than rationality or language,”⁴⁰¹ it “encompasses the full range of human perceptions and activities, and also embraces events.”⁴⁰² For him, all revelation is mediated to us through the channels of experience. However, this does not suggest that revelation is just another category of human experience. Rather, Schillebeeckx claims that “revelation offers its critique of our experience and ends up standing in dialectical relationship to it.”⁴⁰³ By positioning experience at the centre of his thought, Schillebeeckx commits to the concreteness of history. Therefore, it is not surprising that ‘concrete’ is one of Schillebeeckx’s most used adjectives.⁴⁰⁴ This commitment to history also led to his formulation of ‘orthopraxis’ as a key idea, the “rightness of belief must be expressed in a dialectic of theory and action not just theory alone.”⁴⁰⁵ By his situating the discussion of divine revelation within the context of human experience that Schillebeeckx developed an understanding of revelation that is far more than propositions and words. It enabled him to

⁴⁰⁰ Cornelius Ernst in his forward to Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, xviii. See also; Edward Schillebeeckx, *Revelation and Theology*, trans. N. D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward Ltd, 1967), 240-44. Here, Schillebeeckx give a concise presentation of his understanding of revelation and how it operates within the relationship between liturgy and theology.

⁴⁰¹ Schreiter, "Edward Schillebeeckx," 157.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 158.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

demonstrate the way in which events can be revelatory and that “all these revelatory events come to be mediated by language but are never exhausted by language and concepts.”⁴⁰⁶ His theology encourages a perspectival approach; “every perspective contributes to our understanding, but no human perspective can claim absoluteness.”⁴⁰⁷ The way that Schillebeeckx understands the relationship between reality and language emerged from his apprehension of acts of faith as being points of encounter with mystery.⁴⁰⁸

This point presents itself as fundamental to Schillebeeckx’s understanding of God and to the language that he utilises when speaking about the sacraments as encounters of God. For example, he outlines that while experience is understood by the use of rationality and concepts, it cannot be captured in concepts and rationality as the mystery encountered exceeds the limits of human comprehension and linguistic expression. Hence, he criticises the theology of the manuals. He observes that due to such theologies failing to distinguish between the unique mode of existence which is peculiar to humankind, and the manner of being, mere objective ‘being there’, which is proper to the things of nature, “[T]he intimateness of God’s personal approach to man is often lost in a too severely objective examination.”⁴⁰⁹ In the context of the Church and its sacraments humankind had become passive recipients of grace. Briefly stated, the personal communion with God who gives Himself to humankind forms the centre and core of Christianity, but by failing to make this careful distinction the theology of the manuals often obscured “the simple fact of encounter

⁴⁰⁶ Schreiter, "Edward Schillebeeckx," 158.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Here, the term mystery is used in a double sense; both as that which is unknown and also of the Greek *mysterion*, a path to knowledge that transforms the subject who journeys this path.

⁴⁰⁹ Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, 1.

with God.”⁴¹⁰ This presents itself as the basis of Schillebeeckx’s sacramental conception. He approaches the sacraments from the standpoint of the idea of “human, personal encounter.”⁴¹¹

According to Schillebeeckx, Christianity is above all a saving dialogue between humankind and the living God. For him, the core of Christianity is the relationship between the Creator and his creation, and this relationship finds its fullest expression in the Church and its sacramental life. Yet, he makes clear, that while humankind can reach God through creation, humankind cannot by its own powers establish any personal and immediate contact with God. The reason for this, says Schillebeeckx, is that “by means of his [humankind] natural faculties alone, man reaches God only in and through creation; that is to say, as the absolute principle of its being.”⁴¹² Therefore, humankind reaches God, in its human way, not as a *person* in and for himself, but by way of creation we affirm that God is a personal absolute in who the reason for the existence of humankind is found, and God therefore is the source of ultimate meaning to our creaturely life, thus humankind is able to *desire* a personal relationship with God. For Schillebeeckx, this is the “supreme possibility of our life in this world.”⁴¹³ However, as humankind is only able to reach God by way of creation this desire is by its nature powerless. He states that this desire is a mere “nostalgia for religion or for personal relationship with God.”⁴¹⁴ As human beings left to ourselves we are unable to bring this desire to fulfilment, we find ourselves confined to the world in which we live, and its principles. It is only by grace that humankind can truly serve God as person to person.

Bouyer’s made clear in his theology of the Word that God loves us and reaches out to us first. Likewise, Schillebeeckx emphasises that “[P]ersonal communion with God is only possible

⁴¹⁰ Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, 1.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 2.

⁴¹² Ibid., 1.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

in and through God's own generous initiative in coming to meet us in grace."⁴¹⁵ It is as a direct result of God's divine advance to meet us in grace that humankind lives in a "condition of active and immediate communication with the one who, in this relationship, becomes the living God."⁴¹⁶ For Schillebeeckx, this encounter of God and humankind, the act itself which can only take place on earth in faith, is salvation. He states that this encounter must be understood as involving a disclosure of God by revelation and a devotion to God's service on the part of humankind. Like Bouyer, he claims that a richer understanding of divine presence, especially in relation to the sacraments, can be found in scripture. He outlines that where philosophy speaks of us of a divine presence which makes humankind aware of its creatureliness, that is, the creative act of God sustaining humankind in being, scripture speaks of the 'indwelling of God'. This is an integral aspect of Schillebeeckx's theology of the sacraments, he consistently emphasises the primacy of God in all things.⁴¹⁷

For Schillebeeckx, understanding divine presence as an 'indwelling of God' is far more profound and signifies "familiar living together of God the three persons and man."⁴¹⁸ For him, it is only when divine presence is understood in this way that one can even begin to speak of personal communion between God and humankind. He states that "[O]nly in grace does God's presence in man blossom forth into an intimate and living communion."⁴¹⁹ This communion is only possible through our encounters with the risen Christ in the liturgical worship. According to Schillebeeckx, God is present to us in a "mediated immediacy, i.e., mediated through human history and through creation in such a way as to be made immediate or directly present."⁴²⁰ For him, this is the core and centre of the economy of the sacramental encounter. The sacraments are acts of Christ. In the sacraments we encounter the divine

⁴¹⁵ Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, 2.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴¹⁷ Schreiter, "Edward Schillebeeckx," 159.

⁴¹⁸ Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, 4.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ Schreiter, "Edward Schillebeeckx," 160.

presence, the *Kyrios*, now in his Spirit-filled existence and it is by the virtue of this encounter, this mediated immediacy of the risen Christ that we participate in the Paschal Mystery, that is, in the mystery of salvation.⁴²¹ This is the mystery that Schillebeeckx speaks of, that baffles the rationality and linguistic capabilities of humankind.

Hence, similar to Bouyer, the theology of Schillebeeckx presents a far more developed understanding of the Church and the sacraments while still utilising the theological and historical insights of Casel throughout their theological reflection on the sacraments. With the modifications made by both Bouyer and Schillebeeckx, Casel's theology was reformulated into a richer and more coherent theology. Hence, it is important that attention is now given to the Second Vatican Council's teaching on the liturgy as it is here that Casel's Mystical theology, having been modified and refined, came to be accepted at an official level of Church.

3.5. The Second Vatican Council and the Official Acceptance of Mystery

3.5.1. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum concilium) (1963)

The liturgical reform of Vatican II marked the high point of the liturgical renewal of the twentieth century. Josef Andreas Jungmann highlights that since the beginning of the liturgical movement a central concern of its renewal was its efforts to evoke the celebration of Eucharist, rather than, the cult of the Eucharist. Jungmann claims that "[T]he Council made these efforts its own."⁴²² In *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Council presents an enriched theology of the Eucharist. However, the Constitution did not change anything already presented in *Mediator Dei*. Rather, the Council further developed the teachings which *Mediator Dei* proclaimed. Still, it must be acknowledged that as a result of the Constitutions

⁴²¹ For an excellent analysis of Schillebeeckx understanding of Christ's resurrection as the act that conquered the negativity of Jesus' dying on the Cross see; John P. Galvin, "The Resurrection of Jesus in Contemporary Catholic Systematics," *Heythrop Journal* 20, no. 2 (1979): 134-35.

⁴²² Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 31.

brevity, it does not present the same level of analysis found in *Mediator Dei*. Instead, the Constitution provides a basic outline of a theology of the Paschal Mystery which must be understood in light of the theological developments which led to its promulgation. When this point is acknowledged the richness of its teaching can be truly apprehended. By given greater consideration to the Paschal Mystery itself, the Constitution marked the official acceptance of the centrality of mystery to theologies of the Eucharist. It presents for the first time, an acceptance of the insights raised initially by Casel at official levels of the Church.

In addition, the language used by the Council in the Constitution is deeply rooted in scripture which stands in sharp contrast to the more scholastic inspired terminology of *Mediator Dei*. Thus, by engaging in a fuller way with the Paschal mystery, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* develops a theology of the Eucharist that is far more receptive of the Easter events and their unity. It emphasises not only the Eucharist as sacrifice, but as the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection. Unlike *Mediator Dei*, the Constitution recognises in its treatment of Christ's manifold-presence in the Eucharist that the risen Jesus is also present in proclamation of the Word. However, before engaging with the Constitution's teaching on the Eucharist, it is important to examine Council's teaching on the Paschal Mystery.

3.5.2. *The Paschal Mystery and the Nature of the Liturgy*

An analysis of *Mediator Dei*, as mentioned above, highlights the fact that the encyclical passed over the Easter mystery itself in total silence. This cannot be said of the Council's teaching on the Eucharist which it understands as being principally a celebration of Christ's Pasch; His Passion, Resurrection and Ascension. The most notable difference between *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Mediator Dei* emerges in their consideration of the Paschal Mystery and the nature of the liturgy. Placid Murray states that the Constitution differs from *Mediator Dei* "not *materialiter*, but *formaliter*: the elements are the same, but they are re-

grouped in a unifying insight⁴²³ in the Constitution. The Council's insight, says Murray, emphasises that the Redemptive work of Christ is continued by Christ Himself through the liturgy. Christ's Paschal Mystery, His dying which destroyed our death and His rising which restored our life, is mysteriously and efficaciously present in the liturgy and particularly in the Eucharist. For instance, the Constitution affirms that "[T]o accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in his Church."⁴²⁴ Murray states that this perspective is, at one and the same time, "biblical, liturgical and kerygmatic"⁴²⁵ as it considers the salvific work of Christ in the same manner as the New Testament writers.

Article 6 of the Constitution emphasises the inseparability of both word and sacrament in the Church. This indissoluble relationship further develops the profound nature of the liturgy when it is understood in light of the apostolic preaching of the Gospels. Pierre Marie accentuates this point stating that:

[B]ecause of their sacramental power the apostles not merely presented a verbal account of the mystery of Christ, an account which, for all the undoubted power of the Spirit accompanying it and working through it, remained an objective appeal to the mind and heart of those who heard it; they could too, in the Mass and the sacraments, actually bring the faithful into mysterious and efficacious contact with the Paschal Mystery of Christ itself.⁴²⁶

Hence, the liturgy can be understood as a form of "preaching Christ to which a new dimension of reality has been given by God."⁴²⁷ The whole message of salvation is presented in the liturgy and is ready to be acted on, as Cardinal John Henry Newman's maxim

⁴²³ Murray, "Christ in Our Midst: Christ in the Liturgy According to the New Constitution," 269.

⁴²⁴ Sacrosanctum Concilium, n. 7. Hereafter referred to as S.C.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Pierre Marie, "The Making of the Constitution," *Doctrine and Life* 14, no. 2 (1964): 78.

⁴²⁷ Ibid..

expresses “[L]ife is for action.”⁴²⁸ The entire Constitution, especially its understanding of the nature of the Liturgy, presents itself as a call to action, as a call to liturgical worship, in which the Christians actively participate in the Paschal Mystery itself.

The Constitution understands and speaks of the Paschal Mystery in a more biblical manner than *Mediator Dei*. In particular, it develops an understanding of the Paschal Mystery as described by St Paul and St John. From a reading of the Constitution, three aspects emerge as being integral to its understanding of the Christian Mystery: “the Paschal Mystery is a single mystery; it is Christ’s victory; it is Christ’s passage from this world into the Father.”⁴²⁹ Here, the acceptance by the Council of Casel’s insights is clear as each of these principles have already been raised in his theology. However, it is also interesting to note that the first two points as they appear in the Constitution find their inspiration in the Gospel of John rather than in the writings of St Paul.

Firstly, the unity of the Paschal Mystery is expressed by the evangelist in John 11:51-52 on Caiaphas’s prophecy: “...holding as he did the high priesthood in that year, he was able to prophesy that Jesus was to die for the sake of the nation; and not only for the nations sake, but so as to bring together into one all God’s children, scattered far and wide.” Here, it is clear that not only is Christ’s death one mystery with His resurrection, and directed towards it, but the same movement incorporates the redemption of humankind.⁴³⁰ The Constitution connects our death with that of Christ’s in its teaching on the funeral rite. In article 80 it states that the funeral ceremony should “express more clearly the paschal character of

⁴²⁸ Cardinal John Henry Newman, *Discussions and Arguments*, uniform ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1871), 301.

⁴²⁹ Murray, "*Christ in Our Midst: Christ in the Liturgy According to the New Constitution*," 270.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

Christian death.”⁴³¹ It emphasises that the funeral rite should better communicate that Christian death is patterned on the death and resurrection of Christ.

Secondly, the victory of Christ in His Paschal Mystery is another scriptural image best illustrated in the Fourth Gospel. Murray states that “the Resurrection does not only follow after Jesus death – it springs from it.”⁴³² It is within this context that the Constitution understands the Paschal mystery as victory. This is also a clear example of the way in which the Constitution covers a scholastic formulation in scriptural language, in this instance, the doctrine of merit and satisfaction.

Finally, the third aspect of the Paschal mystery that is taken up by the Constitution is that of Christ’s passage to the Father. Murray suggests that this is “the *leitmotiv* of the whole Paschal Mystery.”⁴³³ Christ through His death on the Cross has passed from this world to the Father and to the liturgy. This affirmation is the richest and most profound of the biblical themes on the Paschal Mystery. This biblical motif has been discussed at length in our analysis of St Paul’s understanding of the Cross, particularly in the way it appears in the theology of Casel, and its later development by Bouyer and Schillebeeckx in their theology. Yet, it is the words of St Leo the Great (461 AD) which give it clearest expression, “[W]hat was visible in our Redeemer has passed over to the sacraments (or mysteries).”⁴³⁴

These three principles form the centre of Constitution’s presentation of the Paschal Mystery. Its understanding of the Christian mystery is firmly rooted in scripture where the Paschal Mystery is resolutely situated at the centre of Christ’s salvific work. Murray states that the Mystery “insists on the positive result: the gift of the Spirit who will bring us to the Father,

⁴³¹ In particular see; Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 55-56. See also, Colman O’Niell, “General Principles,” *Doctrine and Life* 14, no. 2 (1964): 74-87.

⁴³² Murray, “*Christ in Our Midst: Christ in the Liturgy According to the New Constitution*,” 270.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁴ “*Quod itaque Redemptoris nostri conspicuum fuit, in sacramenta transivit.*” St. Leo the Great, *Sermon* 74, 2; PL 54:298.

rather than on the negative one – the destruction of sin.”⁴³⁵ This is the Mystery which the Constitution situates at the centre of the liturgy.

The Council places Christ’s own action, His redemptive work, at the fore front of the sacraments and of their efficacy. Here, Schillebeeckx’s influence is clear, specifically his understanding of the sacraments as acts of Christ. While the Constitution does not use Schillebeeckx’s term ‘encounter’ in its teaching on sacramental efficacy or in the text in general, it does refrain from the impersonal phrase *opus operatum*, ‘the thing done’. Instead, the Council uses a significantly more personal phrase, *Christus praesens adest* meaning ‘Christ is at hand, Christ is here.’⁴³⁶ The Constitution emphasises the importance of the response of faith required in the recipient. It revitalises scholastic terminology by referring to the sacraments as *sacramentum fidei*.⁴³⁷ However, it is important to highlight that the emphasis placed on faith by the Council does not situate the entire reality of the sacrament in the subjective disposition of the recipient, nor does it take away from the efficacy of the outward rite.⁴³⁸ While the Council safeguards the efficient causality of the sacraments in article 59, it also outlines that the sacramental signs should not only test but nourish the faith of believers. It insists that the sacraments are not meant to hide what is contained in them, but reveal it: the sacraments “are a bridge to grace, not a barrier between us and grace.”⁴³⁹ This is outlined by the Council in article 59:

The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the body of Christ and finally to give worship to God; because they are signs they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen and express it; that is why they

⁴³⁵ Murray, "Christ in Our Midst: Christ in the Liturgy According to the New Constitution," 272.

⁴³⁶ S.C, n. 2, 7, 35.

⁴³⁷ *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 49, a. 3 ad 1, “*passio Christi sortitur effectum suum in illis quibus applicator, per fidem, et charitatem, et per fidei sacramenta.*”

⁴³⁸ S.C, n. 59. See also; Murray, "Christ in Our Midst: Christ in the Liturgy According to the New Constitution," 272.

⁴³⁹ Murray, "Christ in Our Midst: Christ in the Liturgy According to the New Constitution," 272.

are called ‘sacraments of faith’. They have indeed the power to grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them effectively disposes the faithful to receive this grace fruitfully, to worship God duly and to love each other mutually.⁴⁴⁰

Here, Marie-Dominique Chenu highlights that the Christian sacraments are best understood as possessing an “historical coefficient.”⁴⁴¹ This implies that when considering the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, not only should we take their natural symbolism into account, but also Christ’s own choice of these elements.⁴⁴² Within the context of the Eucharistic celebration, the elements of bread and wine do not simply symbolise spiritual food; rather, the adjacency of these elements communicates to us further of body and blood, because Christ Himself wished it so.⁴⁴³ Therefore, the historical coefficient is best apprehended as being essentially a Paschal reference, connecting the Eucharist with the Paschal Mystery.⁴⁴⁴ This connection is of the utmost importance if we are to understand the Constitution’s teaching on the Eucharist. The Council constantly insists that the Paschal Mystery is actively present and efficaciously encountered, in all its unity, in the Eucharist. Here, it is essential that attention turns to the Councils teaching on the Eucharist and its relationship with the Paschal Mystery.

3.5.3. *The Eucharist and the Paschal Mystery*

In its treatment of the Eucharist, the Council found the insights initially raised by Casel to be theologically fruitful.⁴⁴⁵ From the beginning of the Constitution, the Council situates the

⁴⁴⁰ S.C, n. 59.

⁴⁴¹ Marie-Dominique Chenu, "Foi Et Sacrement," *La Maison-Dieu* 71 (1962): 77.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ For an excellent analysis of the relation between ‘sign-quality’ and ‘efficient causality’ in the sacraments, in particular see, Jacques Maritain, *Sign and Symbol: Redeeming the Time*, trans. Harry Lorin Binsse, 3rd ed. (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946), 198. In addition, it is quite interesting to note that Karl Rahner seems to confuse the matter by ascribing efficient causality to the ‘sign-quality’. See especially; Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, trans. W. J. O’Hara, vol. 9, *Quaestiones Disputatae* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), 36-37.

⁴⁴⁴ Murray, "Christ in Our Midst: Christ in the Liturgy According to the New Constitution," 273.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 272-78. See also; Michael Myerscough, "The Holy Eucharist," *Doctrine and Life* 14, no. 2 (1964): 87-94.

Eucharist in the line of the Paschal Mystery stating that “[F]rom that time onwards the Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the Paschal Mystery; reading those things ‘which were in all the scriptures concerning him’ (Lk 24:27), celebrating in the Eucharist in which ‘the victory and triumph of his death are here again made present’ and at the same time giving ‘thanks to God for his unspeakable gift’ (2 Cor 9:15) in Christ Jesus, ‘in praise of his glory’ (Eph 1:12), through the power of the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁴⁶ Here, the biblical emphasis of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is clear. The Council uses the language of scripture and avoids the technical terminology of doctrine whenever possible. Yet, it must be said that such terminology is necessary when dealing doctrinal matters that are particularly delicate. The Council provides a concise yet rich description of the Eucharist in article 47.

Here, Casel’s thought finds true expression. Finding inspiration in the writings of Augustine, the Constitution speaks of the Eucharist as a “memorial of His [Christ’s] death and resurrection, a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity,⁴⁴⁷ a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace and the pledge of future glory is given to us.”⁴⁴⁸ The Constitution emphasises that the Mass is precisely the same Paschal Mystery of Christ, but in a sacrament mode. It insists that the mystical body participates in the Paschal mystery in every Eucharistic action that celebrates the mystery of Christ’s Pasch. Therefore, it is apparent that the Council makes a clear connection between the Christ’s Paschal Mystery and the Eucharist. It makes this connection more profoundly than that described in *Mediator Dei* by engaging with the nature and power of the Paschal Mystery itself. By approaching the liturgy in this way, the Constitution presents a richer understanding of the manifold presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Council outlines that Christ is truly present by His Word when the mystical body gathers in worship.

⁴⁴⁶ S.C, n. 6.

⁴⁴⁷ St. Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium*, Tract 26, ch. 13, PL 35, 1613.

⁴⁴⁸ S.C, n. 47.

3.5.4. *Christ's Presence in the Liturgy by His Word*

In article 7 the Council gives a clear outline of the manifold presence of Christ in the Eucharist stating that Christ is present in:

[1] the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the Cross", but especially [2] under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present [3] in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes. [4] He is present in His Word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, [5] when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).⁴⁴⁹

Although this statement reaffirms the teaching of *Mediator Dei*, there is one very important addition made by the Council, which is, "[H]e is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church." Here, the influence of Bouyer's theology of Word of God is clear. The Council places further emphasis on this mode of presence stating that, "[F]or in the liturgy God is speaking to His people; Christ is still proclaiming the Gospel."⁴⁵⁰ This point is also reaffirmed by Paul VI in his encyclical letter *Mysterium Fidei* (1965) where he writes that the scriptural word "... is not preached except in the name of Christ, by the authority of Christ and with the assistance of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God."⁴⁵¹ In the Constitution Christ's mode of presence in the Word is emphasised only in the context of the reading of Scripture in Church. This is a significant point. The reading of Scripture '*In Ecclesia*' is not understood as meaning merely the reading

⁴⁴⁹ S.C, n. 7. See especially; Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 13. See also; James Quinn, *The Theology of Eucharist* ed. Edward Yarnold, Theology Today (Dublin: The Mercier Press, 1973), 62-66.

⁴⁵⁰ S.C, n. 33. In particular see; Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 23. See also; Witczak, "The Manifold Presence of Christ in the Liturgy," 682-84.

⁴⁵¹ Paul VI, "The Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei*," 16. See also; Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 202-09. See also; Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948 - 1975*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 46.

of Scripture within the four walls of the Church building while Mass is being celebrated. Rather, here “in Church” signifies a much deeper reality. The *Ecclesia* – in this context Her real nature – must be understood in the manner that the Constitution makes clear in article 2:

It is of the essence of the Church that she be both human and divine, visible and yet invisible equipped, eager to act and yet intent on contemplation, present in this world yet not at home in it; and she is all these things in such wise that in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likeness to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come which we seek.

It is only within this interpretation of Church that the Constitution speaks of Christ being efficaciously present in the action of reading Scripture. When *sacrae Scripturae* is read in and to this *Ecclesia*, it is “Christ himself who is there – in the present, not just as a voice from the past – still proclaiming the Gospel to His Church.”⁴⁵² Hence, the Constitution outlines that all other reading of Scripture, either in group meetings or in private, or in paraliturgical services, cannot be considered to be of the same efficacy as when the Word is read in the liturgy of the *Ecclesia*.⁴⁵³ Instead, such actions must be understood as an ‘*overflow*’ from the proclamation of the Word in liturgical worship.⁴⁵⁴ However, if this mode of Christic presence is to be properly understood then Scripture must first be considered as a message not a text. It is only then that the liturgical gathering can be seen as the connatural setting for the proclamation of that message.

It is clear, therefore, that the Constitution has enriched our understanding of the manifold presence of Christ in the Eucharist with the addition of His presence in the His Word. It

⁴⁵² Murray, "Christ in Our Midst: Christ in the Liturgy According to the New Constitution," 280.

⁴⁵³ S.C, n. 7. On this point see Jungmann detailed treatment in Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 13-14.

⁴⁵⁴ It must also be noted that the Constitution does not raise the question of to what extent the Catholic Church recognises Christ’s presence in the reading of scripture within non-Catholic services. However, Schillebeeckx gives some rich insight into how one could approach this issue. See in particular, Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, 229-43.

presents Christ's presence in His Word as a reality that is not in opposition to His presence in the sacred species but as being in intimate relation with it. At the words of consecration the words of Christ are gathered up and are assumed anew, by Christ Himself, so that the symbols of bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, the Word Incarnate. Hence, the message of Scripture which surrounds the sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, is best expressed by Scripture itself "[T]he word of God is something alive and active; it cuts more incisively than any two edged sword...No created thing is hidden from it (Heb 4:12-13)."

3.6. Conclusion

As this discussion has demonstrated, theological reflection on the Eucharist must place the Paschal mystery at its centre. It is only when theologians are truly receptive to the mystery of Christ that the inexhaustible richness of the Eucharist can be recognised. This revitalised appreciation of Christ's Passion, Resurrection and Ascension initially sparked by Casel and then taken up by theologians involved in the liturgical renewal of the twentieth century, such as Bouyer and Schillebeeckx, presents a richer context for theological reflection on the Eucharist. With the insights of such writers, Vatican II was able to better communicate with believers the various ways in which one encounters the risen Christ in the Eucharist. However, while the Constitution recognises that Christ's Pasch is active and efficaciously encountered in the Eucharist, it makes no mention of the transformative power of the faithful's encounters with the risen Christ. While placing the Paschal mystery at the centre of liturgical worship it says nothing of the transformative power of Jesus' resurrection that is experienced through the Spirit in the liturgy which transforms the life and thought of believers. Still, it is important that it is understood that this point does not diminish the liturgical reform inaugurated by Constitution.

Likewise, it must be acknowledged that the theology of those involved in the liturgical renewal of the twentieth century stands in sharp contrast with the rigid theological reflection of the neo-scholastic manuals. The dynamic theology Casel and his colleagues who were involved in the liturgical reform provide a revitalised receptivity to the mystery of Christian worship. From their efforts, a significantly more dynamic context for theological reflection on the Eucharist has emerged, enabling emphasis to be placed on Christ's manifold presence, particularly through His Word. At this point it is important that attention is given to theologies of the Eucharist which developed after the Council. In Chapter Two it was highlighted that O'Collins, Kelly and Bermejo claim that a strange neglect of Christ's resurrection still persists in theologies of the Eucharist. In what follows, this claim will be examined, particularly in relation to post-conciliar theologies of the Eucharist.

Chapter Four

Has an Appreciation of the Resurrection Flourished in Post-Conciliar Theologies of the Eucharist?

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter the views of three post-Vatican II theologians will be analysed, namely, Jean-Luc Marion, Louis-Marie Chauvet and Herbert McCabe, with a view to establishing how they utilise the insights of post-modern philosophy and theology to develop a richer appreciation and receptivity to the dynamics of humankind's encounters with the risen Christ present in the Eucharist. It will be argued here that while such theologians of the Eucharist present significant insights concerning the importance of the dynamics of presence and absence to our encounters with the risen Christ, such theologians fail to let the risen Jesus shape their theology in a more comprehensive and meaningful way. However, before we can attempt to give an adequate treatment of the theology of Marion, Chauvet and McCabe, it is important that we first understand the context in which each of these writers is operating. Discussion will begin by engaging with Martin Heidegger's critique of western metaphysics which has exerted significant influence on said theologians in their understanding of presence and the Eucharist.

4.2. Understanding Presence in a 'Postmodern' Context

4.2.1. Heidegger's Critique of Western Metaphysics

According to Glenn Ambrose, the critique of metaphysics as an onto-theology is commonly associated with postmodern philosophy and theology.⁴⁵⁵ He suggests that the postmodernist

⁴⁵⁵ Glenn P. Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition* (Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), 9.

suspicion of all types of foundational approaches manifests itself in a critique of metaphysics which gives way to a “rejection of metaphysics and a call to its end.”⁴⁵⁶ The genesis of this nonfoundationalism can be traced back in several lines of thought: “from Friedrich Nietzsche to Michel Foucault, from Ludwig Wittgenstein to Richard Rorty, or from Heidegger to many of his interpreters.”⁴⁵⁷ However, it is the line which begins with Heidegger and extends to his French interpreters, such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Luc Marion, that is of the utmost importance for this discussion. Yet, it must be said that this section does assume the risk of neglecting depth for the sake of clarity, narrow focus for the sake of brevity, and it may be said that it projects an alien schematization for the purpose of simplification. However, its purpose is to lay out the central contours of Heidegger’s thought and highlight certain concepts that are integral to an understanding of what Marion, Chauvet and McCabe are attempting to establish in their post-conciliar theologies.

4.2.1.1. *Being and Time*

In his book *Being and Time*,⁴⁵⁸ Martin Heidegger furthered the break with Modern philosophy by bringing together both being and knowing in his project of fundamental ontology, in such a manner, that necessitates a fundamental inquiry about that “creature in whom this question of being arises, namely, human being or *Dasein*.”⁴⁵⁹ He states that the providential goal of *Being and Time* is the “understanding of time as the possible horizon of every understanding Being.”⁴⁶⁰ Hence, *Being and Time* is perhaps best understood as a phenomenological attempt to answer the question of Being through a careful analysis of

⁴⁵⁶ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 10.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Maquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962).

⁴⁵⁹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 11.

⁴⁶⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1.

Dasein. Here, the term *Dasein* should be understood “as the be-ing of the human being.”⁴⁶¹ For Heidegger, human beings exist in a mode of being that is animated by an understanding of Being that involves, principally, a recognition of the difference between *Sein and Seinde* [Being and beings]. Thus, for him, human beings are utterly unique as this mode of being is particular to humankind.

By the term *Seinde* he means ‘things-that-are’, this term simple refers to what metaphysics has commonly called ‘objects’ or ‘the given’. Ambrose suggests that “‘things-that-are’ come to be understood quite differently from the ‘objects’ of metaphysics on the basis of Heidegger’s account of the true nature and meaning of *Sein*.”⁴⁶² Unlike his *Seinde*, Heidegger’s *Sein* possesses a more elusive character. Similar to Immanuel Kant, Heidegger claims that *Sein* does not signify ‘something’ that all entities have in common nor is it one entity among others, for him, it is not a real predicate.⁴⁶³ Rather, *Sein* is perhaps best thought of as being more verb than noun. From this standpoint, *Sein* can be seen as an event or process by which *Seinde* are made manifest. Thus, “*Sein* has more to do with the showing of particular *Seinde*.”⁴⁶⁴ Here, it is worth noting that while the standard translation of *Sein* and *Seinde* as Being and beings is used for the remainder of this section, it is important that we guard, as Heidegger did, against the “nominalization of Being”.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶¹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 11.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Ibid. For a clear explanation of Heidegger’s phenomenology and Kant’s thesis, see especially; Jacques Taminiaux, *Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology*, trans. Michael Gendre (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 69-110.

⁴⁶⁴ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 11. See also; Jean-Luc Marion, “Metaphysics and Phenomenology: A Summary for Theologians,” in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 1997), 281-82.

⁴⁶⁵ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 11.

Ambrose states that the ‘hypostatization of Being’ is a prevailing problem within traditional metaphysics. This persistent deficiency is one of the main targets of Heidegger’s critique of western metaphysics.⁴⁶⁶ He argues that philosophical thought has repeatedly forgotten the difference between Being and beings. He claims that it is has often stayed within a thought structure that centred on an original forgetting of the difference between them. He argues that although thinkers from Plato onwards have reflected on the nature of Being, none have truly asked the question of Being nor have they reached the truth about it.

For Heidegger, in classical metaphysics particular beings are apprehended in an incomplete or distorted manner. He claims that they are designated as that which is ‘given’ or what is present to us and for us. For him, it is precisely because beings ‘present-at-hand’ [*Vorhandenheit*] are experienced as being subject to the ravages of time that the metaphysician assumed it logical to suggest that a permanent and unchanging foundation existed for their Being. Briefly stated, the metaphysician proposed that a most perfect Being exempt from the effects of time served as the ground or cause of all particular beings.⁴⁶⁷ Heidegger states that this is the exact manner in which traditional metaphysics has thought of Being. Therefore, western philosophical ontology can be justly judged to be an onto-theology because it has relied on the projection of an idea of a perfect Being.⁴⁶⁸ Ambrose proposes that it can be understood as a metaphysics of presence, “because the understanding of Being is derived solely from the presence of beings.”⁴⁶⁹ As the title of *Being and Time* suggests, a central goal of Heidegger’s work is the assertion of time into discourse concerning Being.

⁴⁶⁶ Andrew Bowie, *Introduction to German Philosophy: From Kant to Habermas* (Great Britain: Polity 2003), 204.

⁴⁶⁷ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 12.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid. See also; Martin Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?," in *Marin Heidegger Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge Classics, 2011), 41-58. This book section presents the first English translation of *Was ist Metaphysik?*

⁴⁶⁹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 12. Furthermore, it could likewise be considered a *metaphysics of the timeless*. See in particular, Taminiaux, *Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology*, 175-89.

While presence and substance prevailed in classical ontological reflection, Heidegger's thought was dominated by temporality. Ambrose claims that temporality plays such a central role in Heidegger's thought that perhaps the title of his book should have been 'Time and Being'.⁴⁷⁰

4.2.1.2. *Temporality and Dasein*

The centrality of temporality for Heidegger emerges in his initial analysis of *Dasein*. Here, he outlines that temporality is the primordial constitution of *Dasein* and that this point presents itself in three significant ways. Firstly it concerns the mode of existence particular to human beings, that is, the way in which the human mode of being is always a "being there" in a particular time and place.⁴⁷¹ However, Heidegger suggests that this 'being-there' in a time and place is not necessarily a choice. This aspect of our being leads Heidegger to speak of the "thrownness" [*Geworfenheit*] or the "facticity" [*Faktizitat*] of *Dasein*.⁴⁷² Heidegger suggests that *Dasein* is not the master of its genesis and that *Dasein* finds itself standing in "referential dependence" to other beings.⁴⁷³ This brings us to the second way in which the importance of temporality emerges in Heidegger's thinking; the sense of mortality with which human beings live.

For Heidegger, human beings live with an awareness that "things do not have to be and in fact will not always be."⁴⁷⁴ This becomes more pronounced when we consider that human beings live with the knowledge that the same fact of existence is true even of them. Thus, to

⁴⁷⁰ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 12. See especially, Heidegger's preface to William Richardson, *Heidegger - through Phenomenology to Thought*, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (New York: Fordham University Press, 1967), xvi. Here, Heidegger comments on his failure to complete the third division of Part One of *Being and Time* which was in fact entitled *Time and Being*.

⁴⁷¹ Here, it is important to highlight that "there-being" is a literal translation of *Dasein*.

⁴⁷² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 174.

⁴⁷³ Richardson, *Heidegger - through Phenomenology to Thought*, 37.

⁴⁷⁴ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 12.

deny this 'being towards death' is to deny an integral truth of our existence. For Heidegger, our finite transcendence is intrinsically connected to death which he understands to be the 'ultimate potentiality' of *Dasein*.⁴⁷⁵ Ambrose states that, "this means that *Dasein*'s 'ultimate concern' [*Sorge*] is for itself as finite transcendence."⁴⁷⁶ This is not simple a concern for *Dasein*'s own being, rather, as *Dasein* is always a 'being-with' there is also a concern for other beings which speaks to a referential dependence.⁴⁷⁷ This leads us to the final way in which temporality occupies a central role in Heidegger's thought.

For Heidegger, the human mode of being is lived historically; it is open to time – past, present and future. This receptivity or openness to time actually makes the definitive line between past, present and future too difficult to draw. It presents the past as the condition of possibility for the present and the future as the non-identical repetition of the past.⁴⁷⁸ William Richardson further emphasises this point, stating that, "[T]here-being's coming is to a self that already is-as-having-been to such an extent that it's coming is a type of return; on the other hand, There-being *is* what it has been only as long as the future continues to come."⁴⁷⁹ Put simply, human existence never concerns only the present. Richardson also makes this point:

[S]o it is that, in the structure of There-Being's transcendence, existence consists in the coming [future] of Being to a self that already is [past], rendering manifest the Being of beings with which it is concerned [present].⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 308.

⁴⁷⁶ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 12.

⁴⁷⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 160.

⁴⁷⁸ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 13.

⁴⁷⁹ Richardson, *Heidegger - through Phenomenology to Thought*, 86.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

Hence, temporality presents itself as the horizon of Being as human beings live in the “horizon of a past whose institutions, embodied in language and social structures, give shape to the present and trajectory to the future.”⁴⁸¹ This then highlights that the ‘thrownness’ of *Dasein* is concerned with the way in which “the past projects a future, or rather possible futures, ahead of itself.”⁴⁸² Therefore, for Heidegger, the goal of fundamental ontology can only be reached through an analysis of *Dasein*. However, the reason why Heidegger held this point of view must be observed if one is to understand his insight.

In his *Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology*,⁴⁸³ Jacques Taminiaux highlights that a recollection of the history of philosophy complicates the meaning of Being as it presents a plurality of meanings: for instance, life, existence, subsistence, actuality, and presence.⁴⁸⁴ It is important to recognise that Heidegger did not want to totally renounce such meanings of Being and construct a new philosophy in their wake that would escape the mistakes of the philosophers of the past.⁴⁸⁵ Rather, he poses the question of a potential unity of the manifold meaning of Being. Heidegger believed that the key to the formation of such a unity could be discovered in Husserl’s phenomenology.

According to Taminiaux, Husserl suggests that the most fundamental perception, intentionality, involves a pre-understanding of the Being of beings.⁴⁸⁶ He proposes that implicitly every account of Being and experience presupposes some knowledge of Being. For Heidegger the human being is, in a sense, already a ‘metaphysical’ creature because *Dasein* is vitalised by an apprehension of Being. Richardson alludes to this stating that Heidegger’s

⁴⁸¹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 13.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Jacques Taminiaux, *Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology*, trans. Michael Gendre (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991).

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 115.

⁴⁸⁵ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 13.

⁴⁸⁶ Taminiaux, *Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology*, 115-16.

Fundamental Ontology examined what Kant referred to as the “natural propensity” of human beings for metaphysics.⁴⁸⁷ Therefore, what is it about the mode of existence peculiar to human beings that yields and possesses this understanding?

Here, Heidegger emphasises our finite and ecstatic temporality. He suggests that human beings are the ‘very self-consciousness’ of Being and Time. He proposes that the ‘facing towards death’, and the existence in time that self-consciousness implies, brings with it a unique perspective of the Being of beings.⁴⁸⁸ The perspective accepts the fact that beings come and go and that they do not need to be, and yet, will always be. Hence, for Heidegger, temporality, the primordial constitution of *Dasein*, is also the horizon for the “intelligibility of the manifold meanings of Being.”⁴⁸⁹ This point is even addressed in the title of Part One of *Being and Time*: ‘The Interpretation of *Dasein* in Terms of Temporality, and the Explication of Time as the Transcendental Horizon for the Question of Being’.

Heidegger claims that the ‘oblivion of Being’ [*Vergessenheit*] is a outcome of the “inevitability of the fall of *Dasein*.”⁴⁹⁰ Heidegger portrays the fall of *Dasein* as a lapse into ‘everydayness’ [*Alltäglichkeit*] which is a condition of human existence governed only by a vision of beings as ‘present-at-hand’ [*Vorhandenheit*]. Here, “beings become objects exhaustively defined by subjects and their tradition of interpretation.”⁴⁹¹ In ‘everydayness’ *Dasein* encloses itself within a certain kind of world [*Umwelt*] which erects itself as a *closed* totality and therefore betrays *Dasein*’s essential openness. Hence, this view is not only anthropocentric as all objects are intrinsically referred to one another and ultimately to their ‘master’, it is also ethnocentric because this human ‘master’ is always situated within a

⁴⁸⁷ Richardson, *Heidegger - through Phenomenology to Thought*, 31.

⁴⁸⁸ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 13.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

particular tradition closed off from the other and the otherwise.⁴⁹² From this standpoint, ‘everydayness’ masks the truth and depth of Being by perceiving beings as one-dimensional. This then leads to a mutilated understanding of beings as simply” the ‘given’ for us.”⁴⁹³

However, Ambrose states that an even more dangerous effect follows from the direction of this gaze of ‘everydayness’ onto humankind itself. He suggests that the gaze of ‘everydayness’ which occupies a foundational position for a metaphysics of presence, “all too easily leaves one with the impression of a one-dimensional humanity caught in a dialectical conflict, not unlike that of a master and a slave, because each ‘subject’ is always at risk of becoming mere ‘object’ for another.”⁴⁹⁴ While Heidegger’s critique of ‘everydayness’ is severe, it would be a misinterpretation to suggest that he means to abandon the vision of beings as ‘present-at-hand’.⁴⁹⁵ If this point is not recognised, it would be to attribute a purely Romantic vision to his philosophy, a view in which the engineer and the poet cannot co-exist. While Heidegger is most certainly inspired by the German Romanticist tradition – particularly Hölderlin – his philosophical vision of a best possible world requires both the poet and the engineer. Furthermore, ‘everydayness’ as Heidegger understands it relates significantly to the world of work [*Werkwelt*], a place where ‘Things’ are tools and instruments for survival.

⁴⁹² Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 14.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid. Furthermore, it is important that Heidegger’s critique of humanism is understood with this point in mind. This point is significant as Heidegger is not anti-humanistic, rather, he was merely severely critical of the metaphysical view of the subject behind humanism. See, for example, Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Martin Heidegger Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge Classics, 2011), 141-82. Originally published as *Brief über Humanismus* in 1947.

⁴⁹⁵ See especially, Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 115-17. Here, Heidegger outlines that it is of the utmost importance to understand that the ontic and ontological or the existential or existentiell intrinsically belong together. Briefly stated, there is no World without *Dasein*, nor is there *Dasein* without a world of ontic beings. In addition, Richardson accentuates this point when commenting on this section of *Being and Time*, he writes: “Insofar as there-being is (exists in its ontological dimension) it is already orientated toward a ‘World’ of beings in its ontic dimension.” See especially, Richardson, *Heidegger - through Phenomenology to Thought*, 58.

Therefore, for Heidegger the problem is not the world of ‘everydayness’, but a metaphysics that is built upon “this partial, not even essential, vision of things.”⁴⁹⁶ Heidegger’s critique of ‘everydayness’ acts as a catalyst for a break with the habitual way of ‘thinking’ about the world and prevents the ‘engineer’ from dictating a metaphysics. Thus, “Beings are not essentially instruments for us nor can we master them.”⁴⁹⁷ For example, consider the Rhine, engineers may successfully construct a dam on the Rhine, but the ‘riveness’ of the Rhine will eventually come to transcend any human structure meant to subdue its essential nature. Here, it is important to observe Heidegger’s use of linguistic metaphors when describing Being and what he considers the call of Being.

4.2.1.3. *The Call of Being*

Linguistic metaphors such as Saying [*Sage*], Calling [*Ruf*] and Tolling [*Galäut*] appear frequently in Heidegger’s later writings. Using such terms, Heidegger celebrates the poet as the one who is charged with listening to Being. Here, the way in which Heidegger commits to a phenomenological approach emerges from his focuses on how things announce themselves. Heidegger draws upon the perspectives of the poet and the engineer in the context of viewing the Rhine in order to demonstrate the difference in *attitude* and *response* when each encounters the river.⁴⁹⁸ For example, when the engineer sees the Rhine he views it as a source of energy and sets out to use it as such. The attitude of the engineer is instrumental: the river is viewed as a source of energy and should be utilised to yield something for us but by responding in this way the Rhine – the other – is sacrificed.⁴⁹⁹ However, the attitude and response of the poet is quite different. He/she allows the Rhine to appear in its full

⁴⁹⁶ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 15.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Loy Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972), 151.

⁴⁹⁹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 15.

significance and preserves it. Joy Vail states that the poet does this by calling attention to the multiple meanings of the Rhine, for example: “assembler and relater of men, as wandering expanse, as giver of nourishment and life, as gift of nature, as separator of man, as destroyer of life.”⁵⁰⁰ In this perspective the river is seen as relating to more than just a particular self-interest of humankind, it is a *potential* focal point of ‘the fourfold’: “earth, heaven, gods, men.”⁵⁰¹ Ambrose claims that the attitude and response of the poet “peers closer into the original revealedness of things-that-are.”⁵⁰² Hence, the poetic vision is more applicable to phenomenology as the perspective of the poet presents a richer approach concerning the truth of Being.

For Heidegger, the Pre-Socratic concept of *aletheia*, a term which signified the unconcealedness of that which is present to us, is central to the truth of Being. *Aletheia* characterised the process itself of the showing of things-that-are. However, he highlights that *aletheia* also involves the ‘withdrawal of Being’ [*Entziehen sich* or *Entzug*] from the very beings which Being brings into presence.⁵⁰³ Hence, we must contemplate Being in terms of temporality. When approached in terms of Time it becomes clear that the presence of things-that-are is always only a happening or event in the temporal sequence of the present. Therefore, for Heidegger, “[T]hings-that-are or that which is presen(t)ce constitute both a presence and an absence of Time and Being.”⁵⁰⁴ Ambrose emphasises this point, and states that the phenomenological and poetic vision of beings in their original revealedness is a:

⁵⁰⁰ Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference*, 151.

⁵⁰¹ Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Martin Heidegger Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge Classics, 2011), 239-56.

⁵⁰² Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 15.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 16.

...recognition of beings in an open moment, suspended between an absent past and future, and constantly happening now in the present as well as a recognition of Being as abiding in the uprising/dissolving that the passage of time so amply signifies.⁵⁰⁵

Preserving this original revealedness is important. For Heidegger, it assists in highlighting a way of seeing the world of the giving as a gift.⁵⁰⁶ Heidegger's engagement with the process of self-showing (*aletheia*) aims to uncover what is most elementary in relation to the given, the given itself, which Vail claims can be understood as the expression of Being.⁵⁰⁷ This point is also implied implicitly by Heidegger when he speaks of Being itself as 'it gives' [*es gibt*].⁵⁰⁸ However, it is important to highlight that he urges caution concerning *es gibt*.

Heidegger argues that, while Being both gives and is given, it is imperative that emphasis is placed on the 'gives' rather than the 'it' as its essence is *the given*. However, while Heidegger's insights have proved useful in for theological reflection, he makes clear in his treatise that, in his opinion, Being itself should not be understood in the sense of the giving with God. On this point he is adamant that for him, Being is not God and thus any connection between God and Being would be rejected by him. For Heidegger, while *Dasein* is vitalised by an apprehension of Being, Being itself remains a mystery for *Dasein*. This mystery is unavoidable as Being can only be understood in its totality when *Dasein* steps out of Being. This is impossible as *Dasein* is constituted by its relationship to temporality and Being. John

⁵⁰⁵ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 16.

⁵⁰⁶ Hence, it cannot be said that this preservation of the original unconcealment of beings is important to Heidegger and his work solely as a result of the forgetting of time by western metaphysics, that is to say, metaphysics obliteration of the 'withdrawal of being'.

⁵⁰⁷ Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference*, 64-66.

⁵⁰⁸ See especially, Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 255. This is also evident in his significant clarification of 'es gibt' in his "Letter on Humanism," 237-38.

Milbank states that this why Being remains a mystery and it is therefore in manner eternally absent, yet, at one and the same time, present in a temporal series of beings.⁵⁰⁹

Although Heidegger initially emphasised *Dasein* and its transcendental understanding of Being, Taminiaux highlights that he later placed emphasis on *aletheia* and the “enigmatic interplay of reverse and unconcealing of the unveiling of Being.”⁵¹⁰ For Heidegger remaining open to Being is an “openness to Mystery” [*Offenheit für das Gelassenheit*] is essential.⁵¹¹ Closing oneself off from this Mystery, by lapsing into ‘everydayness’, would be to renounce *aletheia* and temporality. Heidegger alludes to this in his later writings when he speaks of *Dasein* as a response [*ent-sprechen*] to the ‘Call of Being’.⁵¹² He claims that ‘letting-be’ [*Gelassenheit*] is the appropriate response to Being as Mystery. In his *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*,⁵¹³ Hudson Smith gives a rather perceptive translation of *Gelassenheit* by quoting an unknown source. He translates *Gelassenheit* as “a reverent, choiceless letting-be of what is in order that it may reveal itself in the essence of its being.”⁵¹⁴

Ambrose states that *Gelassenheit* then should be understood as “both an affirmation and relinquishment,”⁵¹⁵ as *Gelassenheit* embraces both a ‘yes’ and a ‘no’ to the sphere of ‘everydayness’.⁵¹⁶ Here, the reason why Heidegger emphasises the co-existence of both the engineer and the poet becomes clear. The ‘yes’ in this context fits the perspective of the engineer as humankind utilises beings as instruments for survival. However, the ‘no’ comes from the poet, as it is essential that one never exhausts their being and thus destroy their

⁵⁰⁹ John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), 300.

⁵¹⁰ Taminiaux, *Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology*, 16.

⁵¹¹ See especially, Martin Heidegger, *Gelassenheit* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959).

⁵¹² Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 16.

⁵¹³ Huston Smith, *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind* (Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1982).

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁵¹⁵ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 17.

⁵¹⁶ Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference*, 63-64.

integrity. Veil accentuates this point, he claims that to see things truthfully requires ‘letting them be’, this involves both openness to a more original revealing of beings and a resolution to ‘let-Being-let-be.’⁵¹⁷ In ‘letting-Being-let-be’ the concept that beings in their be-ing are gift becomes more pronounced. Apprehending things-that-are as gift requires the acquisition of a different *attitude*, one that is conscientious and respectful [*Sorge*]. Therefore, for Heidegger, the courage to let-be prevents the fall of *Dasein* as well as its act of presenting which enslaves beings and forgets the ontological difference.⁵¹⁸ For Heidegger, the poet presents the clearest expression of this resolve to let-things-be.

4.2.1.4. Poetic Thinking

According to Heidegger, the poet sustains this resolve to let-things-be by their use of language. Heidegger’s writings also emulate the method of the poet as he consistently unlocks “the power of language.”⁵¹⁹ Similar to the poet, he strove to uncover the rich meaning that is found at the heart of language. For him language, like *Dasein*, is subject to being economized by ‘everydayness’. He proposes that when language lapses into everydayness the original revealedness of words get lost along with their depth and varied meaning. Thus, language itself is subject to a fall. Here, Heidegger’s concern is etymology. He presents the etymology of common words that had come to be forgotten or were once known but are now ‘unthought’. Heidegger’s interest in etymology can be linked to his desire to rehabilitate language.

Initially, this restoration of language is an implicit aspect, but later made explicit, of the ‘overcoming’ of meta-physics and fundamental ontology. This is an essential point for Heidegger as language can carry the history of the revealedness of Being. He makes this clear

⁵¹⁷ Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference*, 64.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

⁵¹⁹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 17. It must be highlighted that this point is true of ‘early’ Heidegger and ‘later’ Heidegger.

stating that “language is the house of being,”⁵²⁰ this implies that language is the place where Being presents itself. Hence, Heidegger writings manifest a desire to be a ‘great listener’ like the poet. His perspective provides a richer way of thinking, one that is less inclined to thrust the rigid and narrow interests of the subject. By thinking this way, his thought is more *open* and *responsive* to things at hand.

Heidegger argues that western philosophical thinking has been blinded by a metaphysics of presence, to such an extent, that writers rarely ever engage in thinking. Such metaphysical ‘thinking’ follows a strict logic which is focused on the attainment of certainty. Such logic fits well with the climb of modern science coupled with mathematics as project a vision of things within a uniform space-time thus enabling one to see all bodies, places and motions as alike.⁵²¹ The method of metaphysical ‘thinking’ brings an *a priori* mathematical scheme to the study of beings and is only applicable to beings in their presence. Therefore, Heidegger claims that such a method forgets the absence or withdrawal of Being, it neglects “what calls for thinking.”⁵²² It is imperative, according to Heidegger, that this *mathesis* is unlearned or forgotten if we are to truly think.

Heidegger’s thinking emulates the mystic or artisan, but this kind of thinking is grievously undervalued in a scientific culture which exalts a rigid logic or calculative contemplation. Heidegger strove to unshackle thought from this manner of thinking in the hope of releasing thinking into its essence. For Heidegger, “true thinking is engaged by Being and therefore is a *response* to the matter at hand.”⁵²³ In his *What Calls for Thinking?*⁵²⁴ Heidegger explains this

⁵²⁰ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 217.

⁵²¹ Martin Heidegger, "Modern Science, Metaphysics and Mathematics," in *Martin Heidegger Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge Classics, 2011), 291.

⁵²² Martin Heidegger, "What Calls for Thinking?," in *Martin Heidegger Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge Classics, 2011), 374.

⁵²³ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 18.

point by using the example of a cabinetmaker. Here, he proposes that the cabinetmakers are persons who are truly called into thinking in their work.⁵²⁵

He highlights that, as an apprentice, the cabinetmaker learns more than just the forms of cabinets, the technical skill, and the tools of the trade.⁵²⁶ Rather, the most significant aspect of the cabinetmaker apprenticeship is way in which he is taught to observe and *respond* to the nature of a variety of different kinds of wood.⁵²⁷ The cabinetmaker sees ‘slumbering’ in the wood as a form that calls forth. Heidegger suggests that words evoke such a seeing for the poet or artisan. He proposes that each is subject to being called, thus, they cannot simply respond in an act of mastery asserting their own demands. He insists that the call is more akin to an invitation and emphasises that if one attempted to master the call, it would be a failure to acknowledge it as a gift.⁵²⁸ For Heidegger, it is by a *mathesis* which projects a ‘thingness’ on beings which leads to a denial of an essential aspect of ones be-ing.⁵²⁹ He states that a greater receptivity of or letting-be of Being is what characterises true thinking.

For Heidegger, thinking is above all discursive and its power is to accurately respond to the call of the truth. Thus, ‘Being’ is bound to the unique qualities of language. Despite the inclination of language to lapse into ‘everydayness’, it is still in the element of Being. Ambrose states that this has nothing to do with the fact that “the essence of language is compatible with the essence of Being.”⁵³⁰ He claims that this can be observed in speech “where language reveals a temporal series of vocal sounds.”⁵³¹ Like Being, language resembles a living presence that arrives and withdraws; “it is an announcing and letting-come

⁵²⁴ Heidegger, "What Calls for Thinking?," 374.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 387.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Heidegger, "Modern Science, Metaphysics and Mathematics," 291.

⁵³⁰ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 18.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

forth.”⁵³² For Heidegger it means more than this. He understands language to be the accomplishment of Being, the “clearing/concealing of Being itself.”⁵³³ Hence language is best understood, according to Heidegger, as the place of the showing/concealing of Being, and therefore, the house of Being. Ambrose states that, “[I]t is as if Heidegger is saying metaphorically that language is like lightning, in that it blazes a trail through the dark night sky marking a path through the ‘open realm’ which defines a horizon and lets its contents appear.”⁵³⁴ Hence, language for Heidegger is similar to a gathering where beings are named and brought to light in a time and place. This point is not too far removed from the ritualised recital of mythical stories which aid in the re-constitution of identity of a particular community.⁵³⁵ Heidegger emphasises the special ability of language to bring together and define the horizon in which we dwell.⁵³⁶ For him, as long as the poet allows and preserves the manifestation of Being in their speech, *Dasein* and Being come together in language.

4.2.1.5. Heidegger and Nonfoundationalism

In summary, Heidegger’s project of fundamental ontology achieved the following: [1] his examination of *Dasein* uncovered temporality as its intrinsic characteristic, [2] his analysis of the question of Being within the horizon of temporality led to him emphasise the truth of Being as *aletheia*, [3] the origin of these two points involved a de-construction of classical metaphysics as a repercussion of the lapse of *Dasein* which is apprehended as an inauthentic mode of human existence in which the truth of Being was concealed by the narrow one-dimensionality of a metaphysics of presence, [4] in what has been referred to as the constructive aspect of Heidegger’s thought, he draws attention to temporality, morality,

⁵³² Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 18. See especially, Heidegger, "The Way to Language," 297-326.

⁵³³ Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 230.

⁵³⁴ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 18-19.

⁵³⁵ See especially, Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 14-16.

⁵³⁶ Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 347-63.

embodiment, historicity and linguistics. Ambrose states, that “by emphasising these very realities that metaphysics suppressed, he sought to ‘overcome’ metaphysics.”⁵³⁷ However, it should be acknowledged that any project which aims to ‘overcome’ metaphysics must truthfully accept these elementary truths of human existence which together affirm the finitude of human being. Finally, [5] the awareness and recognition of human finitude evokes a more authentic *response* to the call of Being which involves an *attitude* of letting-be and openness to the other and what is otherwise.

In addition to the above, the non-foundational implications of Heidegger’s thinking are evident in his fundamental ontology. For instance, in regard to ontology, his critique of the tradition as a metaphysics of presence refutes the positivist perspective of science as well as traditional ‘substance’ – orientated ontological discourse. Furthermore, concerning epistemology and the nature of truth, his treatise is ‘deconstructive’ in the sense that it reveals the constitutive frameworks that are determinative of thought and being.⁵³⁸ Heidegger’s thinking raises the insight that human existence is always linked to a language and culture. This assertion of finitude, says Ambrose, “concedes not only that the truth of Being remains always a mystery, but that truth itself is always contextual.”⁵³⁹

Finally, Heidegger’s later focus on language has exerted significantly influenced the nonfoundationalism of postmodern thought. In fact, it is in Heidegger’s later writings that theologians such as Jean-Luc Marion and Louis-Marie Chauvet find the greater part of their philosophical stimulus. However, many theologians are going further that a just using postmodern insights and are producing what have come to be referred as post-metaphysical

⁵³⁷ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 19.

⁵³⁸ See especially, Thomas Guarino, "Postmodernity and Five Fundamental Theological Issues," *Theological Studies* 57 (1996): 655-68.

⁵³⁹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 19.

and non-foundational theologies. Therefore, at this juncture it is important that we consider a theological reading of the critique of Onto-Theology.

4.2.2. *A Theological Reading of the Critique of Onto-Theology*

According to Ambrose, such ‘post-metaphysical’ and ‘non-foundational’ theologies present a significant turn of events, especially when one observes the sometimes “vehement condemnation of postmodernism issued forth by a multitude of philosophers and theologians alike.”⁵⁴⁰ Such a critique of postmodern thinking is common and customarily highlights five criticisms which can be summated as follows:

[1] there is no absolute order to reality that can be apprehended by reason, therefore the possibility of an objective knowledge of the universe is undercut; [2] human knowledge is decided definitively by perspectival contexts and language in conjunction with being subject to power and interests, hence, knowledge is thoroughly politicised by postmodernism; [3] ironically, while it claims to be accepting of difference and the other, the postmodern perspective actually presents itself as particularistic and through its denial of a common ground it supports a tribalism which effectively makes any dialogue with the other meaningless and redundant; [4] regardless of the efficient critique of scientism, postmodern thinkers still embrace the Enlightenment view that refutes spirit and solely recognises the material world (body) and an intersubject/subjective world (mind); finally, [5] is perhaps the most common criticism, in its affirmation of relativism concerning knowledge, value and meaning, postmodernism is a ‘performative contradiction’.⁵⁴¹ Nonfoundational theologians are receptive of such criticisms, but there are observations in relation to language, knowledge and human experience that cannot be dismissed.

⁵⁴⁰ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 20.

⁵⁴¹ There are also other theological versions of these criticisms. For example, [1] can be understood as a denial of the Christian doctrine of creation, [2] a refutation of *imago dei* and the dignity of humankind, and [5] a denial of objective value and revealed truth.

Some postmodern critiques and manners of critique have proved to be quite useful when wrestling with contemporary issues. In fact, it is important to remember that postmodernism is above all a critique of modernity along with its Cartesian or Enlightenment paradigms. Hence, the influence that postmodernist thinking has exerted on theology is perhaps not as surprising when the uneasy relationship which theology has maintained with modernity is recognised. For instance, in the tradition of liberal Protestantism modern theologians often felt that they had to compromise by having to appeal to some external or common foundation shared with the other secular disciplines.⁵⁴² Karl Barth presented a significant critique of Modern theology in the early twentieth century, especially because of its foundational disposition.⁵⁴³ Yet, it is important to highlight that Barth's critique of modern theology was independent from the work of the founding thinkers of postmodernity as his critique was based solely on theological grounds.⁵⁴⁴

Remaining true to the Protestant tradition, Barth in his theology of the Word presented a theology that had a strong anti-metaphysical character. His work moved away from a philosophy of Being and its correlative metaphysical theology by stressing the sinfulness and finitude of humankind. His critique of an understanding of 'religion' as the idolatrous manifestation of a human desire to be God presents a religious dimension, albeit a negative one, to the desire for mastery that would later be emphasised by postmodern theology. Hence it is not unusual for Barth's theology, which refutes all human foundations,⁵⁴⁵ to be engaged with today in a new way. Such novel readings of his theology feature prominently in many nonfoundational theologies, including those of the Catholic tradition. In addition to Barth's

⁵⁴² However, such compromise was necessary in order to meet the demands of establishing theology as a valid and serious academic discipline along with making Christianity intelligible in the modern age.

⁵⁴³ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, 6 ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972). See also; Alasdair I. C. Heron, "Karl Barth and the Future of Dogmatic Theology," *Communio viatorum* 42, no. 3 (2000): 197-215.

⁵⁴⁴ John E. Thiel, *Nonfoundationalism: Guides to Theological Inquiry* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994), 51.

⁵⁴⁵ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* trans. G.W. Bromiley, vol. I (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), xiii.

critique, theologians were exposed to novel kinds of social analysis and critique in light of the turbulence and devastation of the twentieth century.⁵⁴⁶

According to John Thiel, the development of postmodern nonfoundational theologies can be perceived as the unavoidable reaction to the movement of ideas between the secular academy and theology,⁵⁴⁷ that is, the theological utilisation of contemporary philosophical concepts, explanations and worldviews to mediate religious insights.⁵⁴⁸ Ambrose suggests that Christian theology itself appears, at least to a certain extent, to be “ready-made for the reception of postmodern ideas.”⁵⁴⁹ He argues that this is not solely because of the tedious relationship that exists between theology and modernity, but that there are “inherent theological principles embodied in the Christian tradition that are nonfoundational and even ‘deconstructive’ in spirit.”⁵⁵⁰

However, this point does not imply that in the context of anti-modern theologies, theologies of liberation or nonfoundational theologies, there is a situation in which postmodernism and Christian theology fit perfectly. For example, Thiel highlights the synthesis enacted by theologians between philosophy and theology, namely, St Augustine with Plato, Aquinas with Aristotle and Rahner with Heidegger and observes that each of these synthesis were not unqualified appropriations.⁵⁵¹ Likewise, he makes clear that ‘nonfoundation’ in nonfoundational theology must not be understood as the exact equivalent to the ‘nonfoundation’ in postmodern philosophy. For Thiel, allegiance to the biblical narrative and faith in God signify a manner of foundation. Although this Christian foundation is more akin

⁵⁴⁶ For example, many theologians were moved to engage in such work. A significant example this is the development of feminist theologies. Stimulated and challenged by feminist theory and concerns such theologies benefited a great deal from postmodern points of view and critiques.

⁵⁴⁷ Thiel, *Nonfoundationalism: Guides to Theological Inquiry*, 39.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 21.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Thiel, *Nonfoundationalism: Guides to Theological Inquiry*, 42.

to strong “justifying beliefs,”⁵⁵² Thiel emphasises that Christian theology remains, to certain extent, grounded in this foundation.⁵⁵³ Ambrose emphasises that, while nonfoundationist theologians would claim that faith cannot find foundational certitude by way of metaphysical reflection, there is no need for such writers to abandon or refute the Augustinian credo of ‘faith seeking understanding’. At this point one must consider the theology of Jean-Luc Marion, as his anti-metaphysical theology presents a clear example of the impact that Heidegger’s critique of western metaphysics has exerted on theological reflection in relation to the Eucharist.

4.3. Jean-Luc Marion

4.3.1. *God without Being*

The writings of contemporary French philosopher, Jean-Luc Marion, are of the utmost importance when attempting to understand the phenomenological tradition which tries to incorporate Heideggerian insights into Christian theology. Of particular interest here is his work *God Without Being*⁵⁵⁴ which has exerted significant influence on the theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet. In particular, two aspects of Marion’s effort to overcome onto-theology have a direct impact on and are instrumental in Chauvet’s theology.⁵⁵⁵ Firstly, Chauvet utilises Marion’s distinction between idol and icon in relation to the nature of the sacraments. This

⁵⁵² Thiel, *Nonfoundationalism: Guides to Theological Inquiry*, 29-36.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, 38-43.

⁵⁵⁴ Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁵⁵⁵ It is important to highlight that Marion’s theological reflection is responding to Jacques Derrida’s two fundamental challenges: [1] there is nothing beyond the text, this is to say, there is no true set of references to which text’s point and enable access; and [2] that the whole notion of gift, which is an integral aspect of the Eucharist, is impossible both in practice and in concept. See; Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 108; Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976); Brian D. Ingrassia, *Postmodern Theory and Biblical Theology: Vanguishing God’s Shadow* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1-10; Herbert Marks, "On Prophetic Stammering," in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory*, ed. Regina M. Schwartz (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 60-80; Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 6.

discernment between icon and idol is possibly best engaged with and apprehended in the context of a critique of metaphysics. Secondly, the Heideggerian concepts of *Ereignis* and *es gibt* are transposed by Marion in his theological engagement with God's withdrawal. However, it must be highlighted that Marion, as a theologian, is critical of Heidegger. This point becomes clear in a later discussion of Marion's thinking concerning God's withdrawal in which the withdrawal and the giving of Heidegger's Being-present are distinct from Marion's.⁵⁵⁶

The greater part of Marion's theological agenda is a critique of Western metaphysics, or as Gerald Loughlin refers to it, "a refusal of metaphysics."⁵⁵⁷ Marion attempts to free theology from what he designates "the second idolatry" – that is the idolatry of inscribing 'God according to Being'.⁵⁵⁸ He claims that this can only be done by opposing a strategy of appropriation that is solipsistic which desires to determine the meaning of every 'other', including God [the Supreme Other], by describing its relation to ourselves.⁵⁵⁹ This solipsistic appropriation presents the 'self' as the focal point of reality, as the centre of the universe. Consequently, it turns all language into speech about the self and therefore erases otherness.⁵⁶⁰ Marion emphasises that this manner of appropriation must be resisted. David Moss highlights that for Marion one must abandon:

...the idolatry of the revolving or dazzling return to the Self. Thinking always remains idolatrous so long as it moves within an odyssean economy of appropriation; that is a

⁵⁵⁶ Louis-Marie Chauvet thinks along a line akin to that of Marion. See especially, Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 23.

⁵⁵⁷ Gerard Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," in *Christ: The Sacramental Word*, ed. David Brown and Ann Loades (London: SPCK, 1996), 133.

⁵⁵⁸ David Moss, "Costly Giving: On Jean-Luc Marion's Theology of Gift," *New Blackfriars* 74 (1993): 395.

⁵⁵⁹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 108.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

homecoming to Self of the thought that has defused the otherness of the world, and, in the last instance, the otherness of God.⁵⁶¹

For Marion, western metaphysics is no longer reflection about Being where Being is apprehended as an otherness, such as the otherness of the world, of other persons, or of God. Rather, the focus of western metaphysics has shifted to the Self. For Marion, metaphysical thinking has relinquished its purchase on being and has clandestinely become egocentric. Nathan Mitchell also makes this point, stating that the centre of metaphysics is “a circle, and the circle is the self.”⁵⁶² This S/self is an idol, that is, a god made after our own image and likeness. Marion remains true to his phenomenological method by discussing the distinction between idol and icon within the context of seeing. For him, one’s gaze makes something an icon or an idol, as for him, the idol is totally subject to, or an object of, a self-interested human gaze.⁵⁶³ Marion claims that the idol is the manifestation or visible term of the *human gaze* which unknowingly reflects the anthropocentric source of its gaze like a type of one-way mirror.⁵⁶⁴ Here, an important aspect of Marion’s thinking emerges concerning the emphasis which he places on intentionality, or the attitude behind the human gaze, in relation to the constitution of an idol.

Marion proposes that the idol is a human product, not because it has been shaped by human hands, but because of the particular way in which it is perceived. He claims that manifested idols can dazzle us and one can become transfixed by their superficial appearance. The idol can become, in the worst case, a centre point of our efforts to legitimize, even sacralise, our

⁵⁶¹ Moss, "Costly Giving: On Jean-Luc Marion's Theology of Gift," 395. It is important to highlight that Marion’s apprehension of idolatry is developed in relation to his distinction between icons and idols. See especially, Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 23.

⁵⁶² Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 108.

⁵⁶³ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 23.

⁵⁶⁴ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 7-14.

cultural prejudices and biases as well as our desires. However, in the best case, it may in fact show something of the divine but it ultimately defiles the divine when it apprehends it under human terms.⁵⁶⁵ Marion's greater theological agenda strove to deliver the circle [the self] from this preeminent place.⁵⁶⁶ For Marion, "[T]he Promethean Self must be subverted."⁵⁶⁷ Hence, the idol does not have to be a material object such as the Golden Calf in Exodus 32; it can also be conceptual. It is the latter that is of central significance for Marion's *God without Being* as it is the conceptual idol which fails to acknowledge the Otherness of God and the differentiation between God and creature. Marion characterises this attempt at subversion as a "radical conflict between idol and icon."⁵⁶⁸ Moss states that the idol is "a pagan sun in the human firmament,"⁵⁶⁹ whereas the icon "marks the advance of God...the creedal affirmation of a kingdom without end."⁵⁷⁰ For instance, Marion says that:

[T]he idol always moves...towards its twilight, since already in its dawn the idol gathers only a foreign brilliance. The icon, which unbalances human sight in order to engulf it in infinite depth, marks such an advance of God that even in the times of the worst distress, indifference cannot ruin it.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁵ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 23.

⁵⁶⁶ Furthermore, it must be said that Marion's larger theological program is guided by the question: how can we worship a God who *is* not and in fact cannot *be*? Such a question raises the question of the relationship between the God of Abraham and the god of the Philosopher: is there any link between the god of Athens or the God of Jerusalem? Like Heidegger, Marion is adamant that the god of the philosopher is not the God of theology or as he says "the God before whom David danced". He claims that any worship of a God who *is* amounts to a kind of conceptual idolatry, he highlights the names of many false gods: the ultimate foundation of Leibniz, the *causa sui* of Descartes and Spinoza and the god of morality of Kant, Nietzsche and Fichte. From this point of view, a theology of a God without Being, the affirmation that God does not exist helps to relieve the risk of falling for an idol. Therefore, Heidegger's critique of western metaphysics is understood by Marion as a wake up call for all who utilise such philosophical concepts when explaining the essence of God. In fact, he claims that metaphysical theology has been and is idolatrous. See especially, Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 61-64, 212; "Metaphysics and Phenomenology: A Summary for Theologians," 279-94.

⁵⁶⁷ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 108.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Moss, "Costly Giving: On Jean-Luc Marion's Theology of Gift," 395.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 47.

Marion claims that the icon “does not result from a vision but provokes one.”⁵⁷² Unlike the idol which draws one’s vision only to the visible, the icon evokes a vision of the invisible. In the icon there appears a semblance of the divine. While one’s interest is initially fixed on the visible, the icon *calls* us to see something more; we experience the invisible but it’s not stagnated in the visible. There is a transparency *given* to the icon, the invisible shines forth through the visible both dynamically and continuously. Yet, if this transparency is clouded in any way, the visible seizes for itself an element of the invisible. Ambrose also highlights this point stating that “the human gaze fails to aim past the surface and is not open to the gift [the icon] and the giving Giver [the invisible].”⁵⁷³ Marion emphasises that St Paul in Col. 1:15 refers to Christ as “the icon of the invisible God.” For Marion, every icon can only be understood within the context of the relationship between Christ and God, as it is Christ who is the pre-eminent icon.⁵⁷⁴

Ambrose proposes that there is a parallel to be drawn between Marion’s critique of idols and Heidegger’s critique of the understanding of beings as present.⁵⁷⁵ For Marion, the idol is sign or religious figure made present, it manifests when there is a failure to let-be and see the Other in its ‘ownmost’ being.⁵⁷⁶ In a similar way that the poet listens to or allows the river to speak, and is responsive to the call of Being. The religious person allows the icon to speak, and heeds God’s self-revelation.⁵⁷⁷ Unlike a self-interested gaze directed to an object, the religious gaze *is directed by* the visible icon to the invisible. Hence, for Marion, there are two different types of ‘seeing’ rather than two different objects, idol and icon. The first gaze is an ‘idolic gaze’ which goes no further than the surface and observes only the object. With an

⁵⁷² Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 17.

⁵⁷³ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 24.

⁵⁷⁴ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 17.

⁵⁷⁵ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 24.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

idolic gaze the object can be only for its 'master' as it fixates on the visible, the 'it' of the sign itself, rather than the invisible, the 'given' which is mediated by the sign. Therefore, an idolic gaze is one that is self-interested or egocentric. The second gaze is the 'iconic gaze'. Unlike the idolic gaze, the iconic gaze is *open to* and *opened by* the invisible, the *given* and infinite depth of a sign, event or figure.⁵⁷⁸ Ambrose further suggests that these two ways of seeing are also representative of different *attitudes*.

Ambrose states that the iconic gaze is governed by an *attitude* of letting-be and is therefore open and able to receive the gift shown in and by the icon. However, he claims that the status of being an idol [the 'given'] or icon [gift] depends on the attitude and intention of its observer.⁵⁷⁹ Hence, Ambrose suggests that every icon has the potential to become an idol, yet simultaneously, an idolic gaze – similar to a metaphysics of presence – can be shattered by an appearance of the invisible.⁵⁸⁰ For Ambrose, this implies that the real function of the icon is primarily orientated towards overcoming idolatry, despite the dangers of it being transformed into an idol. The theologian, who must think about matters of faith, is potentially the most vulnerable to the danger of idolatry. Hence, for Marion, Christian writers must adopt a phenomenological approach if they are to remain true to the experience of the divine as non-metaphysical. From his point of view, "the history of the Judeo-Christian experience of God represents a series of iconic figures, signs and events that counter the human idolic gaze."⁵⁸¹

Marion claims that if the conceptual idolatry of metaphysical theology is to be avoided theologians must begin to think of God *without being*. He illustrates this point in script by

⁵⁷⁸ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 24.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ It is useful when contemplating this point to utilise the analogy provided by Ambrose in his engagement with this rich aspect of Marion's theology. He suggests that one should think of the way in which a bright light when placed behind a one-way mirror cause the mirror itself to become transparent.

⁵⁸¹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 25.

writing ‘Gxd’.⁵⁸² Whilst such *erasure* is evident in many postmodern writings, Marion’s possesses an additional but important theological dimension, i.e. the ‘o’ has the sign of St Andrews cross imposed over it.⁵⁸³ This accentuates the centrality of the Cross in Marion’s negative theology. For him, the most powerful iconic revelation for countering the idolic gaze of humankind is the Crucified God, Jesus Christ.⁵⁸⁴ If theologians are to avoid the dangers of idolatry, according to Marion, they must sustain a state of *openness* to God’s self-revelation [the cross] and consistently utilise an iconic gaze. For him, to think of God *without being* “is to replace idol...with icon.”⁵⁸⁵ Marion understands the Cross as the symbol of suffering, shame, degradation as well as the icon of limitless love. Thus, for him the Cross displaces the circle which has classically being an image of eternity and divine being.⁵⁸⁶ Here, it is important to observe the way in which Marion considers the withdrawal and giving of God in light of the image of the crucified Jesus Christ on the Cross.

4.3.2. *The Withdrawal and Giving of the Christian God*

The Crucified One is seen by Marion as the ultimate icon where at “once the gift of God’s love and the affirmation of the difference between God and creature are given witness.”⁵⁸⁷ According to Marion, classical metaphysics is subverted in light of the Cross and God appears in our speech *under erasure* as *not God*.⁵⁸⁸ He emphasises that “[I]t is only the Cross that can signify pure Gift whose name is Love...[O]nly Love gives without any expectation

⁵⁸² Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 46-52.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁸⁴ It is important to highlight that this image of the Crucified Christ is evident in Chauvet’s writings and it likewise operates in a similar iconic manner. See especially, Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 492-508.

⁵⁸⁵ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 47.

⁵⁸⁶ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 109.

⁵⁸⁷ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 25.

⁵⁸⁸ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 109.

of return.”⁵⁸⁹ When Marion speaks of Love as that which gives without any expectation of return, he is implicitly arguing against Derrida’s emphasis on the impossibility of gift.⁵⁹⁰ Here, the contentious issue between Heidegger and Marion emerges concerning the *es gibt* [it gives] as Marion attempts to go beyond both metaphysics and Heidegger’s reprise.

Marion considers the self-giving of *agape* as something totally distinct from Heidegger’s *es gibt*. Here, Marion is working as Christian theologian and contemplates *es gibt* in the context of grace and creation. Unlike Heidegger, there is a separation for Marion between giving and gift. This point presents a problem for Marion as he strove in his writings to see beyond Heidegger’s ontological difference, a further difference.⁵⁹¹ Graham Ward highlights that this difference is developed by Marion theologically through a Trinitarian theology which stresses the distance of the Father and philosophically utilising Derrida’s concept of *différance*.⁵⁹² By doing so, Marion develops an “irreducible difference which cannot be abridged by separating the Giver [Donator] and the visible gift [Being/beings].”⁵⁹³ By establishing this irreducible difference, he enables an understanding of the Heideggerian concept *Ereignis* to emerge in line with creation [Being and beings] as well as God’s act of creation. Here, it is clear that Marion’s theological reflection situates God beyond Being.

In his later works namely, *Prolégomènes à la charité*⁵⁹⁴ and *La Croisée du visible*,⁵⁹⁵ Marion further develops his understanding of the divine *agape* gift-exchange represented in the mode

⁵⁸⁹ Moss, "Costly Giving: On Jean-Luc Marion's Theology of Gift," 395. For Marion the Cross is witness to the divine *agape*, it reveals that God’s “[L]ove loves without condition, simply because it loves for no ulterior motive and for no other reason See especially, Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 47.

⁵⁹⁰ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 109.

⁵⁹¹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 25.

⁵⁹² Ward, "Introducing Jean-Luc Marion," 322. This point is also taken on by Chauvet in what he call’s ‘transitional space’.

⁵⁹³ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 25.

⁵⁹⁴ Jean-Luc Marion, *Prolégomènes À La Charité* (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 1986).

⁵⁹⁵ Jean-Luc Marion, *La Croisée Du Visible* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1996).

of the crucified Christ. In these writings he attempts to place his 'theology of gift' within Christology and the sacraments.⁵⁹⁶ Ambrose states that, for Marion, the death of Christ emphasises the erasure of the visible that aids in safeguarding the iconic function of Christ and assures the distance between creation and God.⁵⁹⁷ It is also important that to recognises that once Marion utilises the language of gift, he enters a form of 'order [economy] of exchange' – "like money...influence, power or any dozen other forms of human commerce."⁵⁹⁸ Here, Marion's emphasis on Love is essential as it is only Love that has the power to go beyond. For him, it is only the divine agape that can break the infernal circle of an order of exchange based on obligation, "a commerce based on calculated debts and settling accounts."⁵⁹⁹ Mitchell states that "*God without Being* is Marion's manifesto, his diatribe against the tyrannizing law contained in the very word 'economy'."⁶⁰⁰ For Marion every economy is an idolatrous order of exchange. Each economy is "a perfect circle of getting, giving, spending, using, incurring debt, negotiating, obliging and repaying"⁶⁰¹ which never reaches its completion as it infinitely recycles itself. So what then is the way out of this impasse? Marion answer lies in his conception of gift and gift-exchange which he illustrates in an exegesis of Luke's account of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32).⁶⁰²

For Marion this parable concerns 'possession.' Moss outlines that Marion's reading of the parable can be summated as follows:

[T]ells of the annulment of the Gift – the gift of 'place, meaning and legitimacy' once shared with the Father and Son alike – into a mode of dissipation lubricated by the younger son's

⁵⁹⁶ Ward, "Introducing Jean-Luc Marion," 323. Here, the Cross of Christ is consistently understood as gift.

⁵⁹⁷ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 26.

⁵⁹⁸ For Marion, such exchanges are central to a theology which refutes metaphysics thus freeing theology from solipsism. See especially, Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 109.

⁵⁹⁹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 109.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid. Economy derives from the Greek *oikos*, 'household,' and *nomos*, 'law'.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 110.

⁶⁰² Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 95-102.

desire. And the moral of the story is this. The parable, which speaks of the ways of the Father, displays the destiny of being when evicted from the play of donation, abandon and pardon; but also...through the forgiveness of the Father, promises a restored currency of an 'entirely other exchange'... [an exchange that is very different from] the idolatry of money.⁶⁰³

However, when we consider Marion's reading of the parable in greater detail it becomes clear that he is drawing attention to is the younger son's request for his 'inheritance' [*ousia* in Greek].⁶⁰⁴ Regardless of the Son having full use of his inheritance and sharing in it already, his request is indicative of a desire to possess. Marion claims that what the son truly desires is to be free of having to constantly recognise and receive *ousia* as gift.⁶⁰⁵ He proposes that the process by which the Father accepts his son's request and liquidates his *ousia* into the form of money, is analogous to the gift becoming an object or the 'given'.⁶⁰⁶ Now, the son has come to 'possesses' his *ousia* and is independent, he no longer needs his father or his place so he moves far away. Yet, after coming to 'possess' his *ousia* and wasting it all, his life becomes void of meaning and his humanity becomes threatened so he returns home to his Father who graciously welcomes him back under his roof. At this point of the story the elder son in his 'object-ion' demonstrates that, just like his younger brother, he too fails to understand the nature of the gift.⁶⁰⁷

For Marion, the paternal gift and its reception establish the filial relation and thereby constitute the dignity and identity of the children. The desire of the younger son to possess the gift, coupled with the eldest son's object to the father's forgiveness and renewed elongation

⁶⁰³ Moss, "Costly Giving: On Jean-Luc Marion's Theology of Gift," 396.

⁶⁰⁴ Mitchell highlights the fact that Marion makes much of the fact that this Lukan parable is the only passage in the New Testament where the Greek term *ousia*, apprehended as 'property' or 'substance' but with thought-provoking allusions to 'being' which is its generative meaning philosophically, is found. See Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 110.

⁶⁰⁵ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 97.

⁶⁰⁶ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 26.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

of the gift, demonstrates that both have succumbed to an *idolic gaze*.⁶⁰⁸ The son's perceive *ousia* as their inheritance, a thing that they can possess, control and master. Such an idolic gaze or attitude causes the filial relation to fall apart and ultimately divides the family. Unlike his sons, the father doesn't perceive things that he possesses with an idolic gaze. With his *iconic gaze* the Father observes not lands and goods, but gifts to be given and received. Marion highlights the words spoken by the father to his sons: "you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours."⁶⁰⁹ Here, he highlights the words of Paul in Acts 17:29, "God gives to all life and breath and everything"; "In God, we live and move and have our being."⁶¹⁰ Hence, the real value of *ousia* is found in its *symbolic value* rather than its market value.⁶¹¹ For the Father, *ousia* signifies the gift and the giving by which each of us become who we truly are: brothers and sisters to one another before the one God.

For Marion, the parable of the Prodigal Son shows the way in which a 'God without Being,' a God who is free from the traps of metaphysics, would behave.⁶¹² For him, God is the Prodigal whose gift delivers *ousia* [Being/being] – that is "being as 'for + givenness,' being as self bestowal and self-emptying, being as lavish pardon and unabashed excess."⁶¹³ Therefore, God's gift is not *something* [i.e. money] but *ousia* [Being/being] and it is only God that can subvert those orders of exchange which diminish human existence to "a treadmill of desire,

⁶⁰⁸ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 26.

⁶⁰⁹ Luke 15:31. Cited by Marion in, *God Without Being*, 99.

⁶¹⁰ Here, it is worth acknowledging that directly after this statement St. Paul situates this God in sharp contrast to an idolic god by imploring those gathered around him to refrain from such an idolic god: "...do not think that the Deity is like gold, silver, or stone, a representation by the art and imagination of man" (Acts 17:29).

⁶¹¹ While Marion does offer a conservative reading of the tradition to a certain extent compared to Chauvet's reading, he does at the same time use the more radical aspects of postmodern philosophy most effectively. Also, we find in Chauvet's treatment of the tradition as somewhat similarly yet distinct emphasis on the importance of the symbolic. See especially, Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 99-109, 18-20, 59-78; Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 26-27; Ward, "Introducing Jean-Luc Marion," 318.

⁶¹² Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 110.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*

accumulation, consumption and obligation.”⁶¹⁴ Marion’s clarification between both icon and idol is central to this point. The prodigal God’s gift as icon discloses the telos of being as self-emptying, pardon, abandonment and donation, but as an idol the gift becomes distorted and its real telos is diverted. Moss also makes this point:

[T]he gift falls...drains into liquid money. And the being which was once inscribed in the fecundity of the land – which of course gives season [after] season – now dissipates into a lubricated debauchery...And so...it is money that both facilitates the exchanges of the idolatrous economy, and indeed becomes the idol par excellence, for money marks the Gift with a price, an exchange value, which terminates utterly the infinite depth of giving.⁶¹⁵

Moss suggests that when this happens, as has in the majority of modern commercialised and industrialised nations, “money and the discourse of ontology amount to the same thing.”⁶¹⁶ We come to equate self and other thus turning what was received as pure gift into a possession, our property. The consequence of this process is the commodification of gift, “the totalitarian subsumption of all human life under a single rubric – the means of production and exchange.”⁶¹⁷ Here Moss is particularly insightful, especially in relation to the impact that the commodification of gift has exerted upon contemporary cultures. He states that money has become:

...a system of...production and exchange much like language, which involves not only a particularly powerful thematic for thought,...for...”root metaphors,” but also [an active participant] in all exchange, that is all thinking...[W]e may or may not have thoughts about money at this or that moment, but our thinking – [our] way of accounting, adequation, and indeed even dialectic – will always participate in the language of *wares*; it will of necessity be

⁶¹⁴ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 110.

⁶¹⁵ Moss, "Costly Giving: On Jean-Luc Marion's Theology of Gift," 396-97.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 397.

⁶¹⁷ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 111.

a *monetary* discourse: economic, under the Law (*nomos*), and always in search of a home (*oikos*).⁶¹⁸

According to Mitchell, this implies that, maybe unintentionally but regardless inexorably, money and metaphysics have come to be one and the same thing, they share an identity and are therefore inseparable.⁶¹⁹ He states that “[M]etaphysics is simply counterfeit money.”⁶²⁰ Hence, the contemporary theological task calls for an attempt to “subdue the [inevitable] economics of thinking by way of banishing money from the discourse of faith.”⁶²¹ Mitchell claims that this task is a theological incumbent upon all. He argues that there is a need for a new order that will enable theologians to speak of both gift and exchange without lapsing into the tyranny of economics. The theologian needs to become more like the poet and be able to listen and respond to Being and refrain from lapsing into *everydayness*. Moss states that one’s task then requires acknowledgment and contemplation concerning “the ineffable exteriority [that is, ‘otherness,’ not made by us] of God’s love which has become for-us in Christ, i.e. learning the dauntingly difficult discipline of rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s, and doing it all in the one language, one life.”⁶²²

Marion desires a pure pre-ontological discourse for God, a language that has yet to be contaminated by the counterfeit metaphysics of money.⁶²³ Theology today is then charged with the task of thinking in a way that refuses to count the cost. According to Mitchell, “[I]t must expose the utter poverty of the riches we believe to possess and control...these riches include [indeed, they ritually embodied and enacted by] the gifts we bring to Eucharist.”⁶²⁴ Moss highlights that, while preparing the gifts at Sunday Eucharist, “the presence of money,

⁶¹⁸ Moss, "Costly Giving: On Jean-Luc Marion's Theology of Gift," 397.

⁶¹⁹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 111.

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Moss, "Costly Giving: On Jean-Luc Marion's Theology of Gift," 397.

⁶²² Ibid., 397-398.

⁶²³ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 112.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

in this symbolically charged transition [from Word to Sacrament]⁶²⁵ would appear to threaten the Eucharistic exchange proper by claiming to be “*another place* [a rival place, a competitor] in this [sacramental] world where sign and referent coincide in the Word which is God.”⁶²⁶ Mitchell claims that we still insist, therefore, that our collection of gifts and money are totally different, utterly distinct, from that *other* exchange in which the creaturely elements of bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ *given for us*.⁶²⁷ Yet, Mitchell suggest that our contemporary issue rests on “the fact that we think that our collection of money and goods remains filthy lucre [albeit filthy lucre for a good purpose].”⁶²⁸

Such a view demonstrates a failure to understand the way in which the prodigal God, as icon, subverts all our orders of exchange. It is imperative that one recognises that God generously and freely transforms our *ousia* [that is, the material goods brought to the poor] in a much more lavish play of divine donation [remember the Cross and the displacement of the circle], and so makes our creaturely “money into the currency of an utterly new exchange,” one that is totally distinct from the everyday money-based commerce that operates amongst humankind. For this reason, theologians of the Eucharist in the discourse on the Eucharistic celebration, cannot separate *care* from *cult* as in the Eucharist the body of Christ, both on and at the table, are utterly committed to the poor. Since Marion’s larger theological program has been outlined, it is significant that one observes the way in which his non-metaphysical thinking shapes his understanding of Christ’s Eucharistic presence.

⁶²⁵ Moss, "Costly Giving: On Jean-Luc Marion's Theology of Gift," 399.

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

⁶²⁷ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 112-13.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 112.

4.3.3. Marion's Theology of Eucharistic Presence

In *God without Being* Marion is critical of Eucharistic theologies concerning real presence, especially those seeking alternatives to the language of transubstantiation.⁶²⁹ Marion's position develops from the conviction that both time and space have become commodified. He suggests that this commodification emerges in understandings of presence that theologians had been developed from classical metaphysics. This commodification has had disastrous consequences for theologies of Eucharistic presence. For Marion, the metaphysics of being is ultimately a metaphysics of the *present*, a metaphysics of temporality which is merely [solely] understood as the present. He states that, from the time of Aristotle until the middle of the nineteenth century, this manner of thinking dominated most of Western philosophy.

Loughlin highlights that in such a perspective time, understood as the here and now, the present moment, establishes "the past as that which ends when the present begins, and the future as that which begins when the present ends."⁶³⁰ Here, it is clear that both past and future are established by negative limits. Such an understanding of time presents the past and the future as that which is *not* the present, and therefore, implicitly not *time*. Thus, such a view speaks of the present moment as that which determines both past and future. From this perspective the only mode of presence must therefore be *now*, that is, a presence which is only valid to the extent that our present consciousness can calibrate it and render it *present* by making it present to our consciousness.⁶³¹ For Marion, this implies that time has become the prisoner of consciousness. A parallel can be drawn here with regard to the way in which *being*, in traditional metaphysics, has become interchangeable with money. Briefly stated, in much the same way as being has come to be held hostage by human orders of exchange,

⁶²⁹ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 161-82.

⁶³⁰ Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 133.

⁶³¹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 113.

presence has come to be held captive by human consciousness.⁶³² For Marion, such a view has led to the commodification of both time and space as both being and time have become commodities, commerce and media of exchange which are conclusively determined by human self-consciousness. Marion attempts to counter this commodification in his theology of real presence.

At the beginning of his theology of the Eucharist Marion observes that “[T]he Eucharist requires of whoever approaches it a radical conceptual self-critique.”⁶³³ He claims that without conversion Eucharistic theology is impossible and theologians must be ready to challenge, even abandon, their most cherished conceptualizations. Marion directs this affirmation both to traditional and progressive theologians as, for him, both are vulnerable to idolatry.⁶³⁴ He provides an unflattering caricature of how this point holds true concerning theologians who cling on to the language of transubstantiation. He writes that for such writers:

...substantial presence...fixes and freezes the person in an available, permanent, handy, and delimited *thing*. Hence the imposture of an idolatry that imagines itself to honor ‘God’ when it heaps praises on his pathetic ‘canned’ substitute [the reservation of the Eucharist], exhibited as an attraction [display of the Holy Sacrament], brandished like a banner [processions], and so on.⁶³⁵

Here, it is important to highlight that while traditionalist writers are heavily influenced by Aquinas, their understanding of transubstantiation is not totally reflective of his presentation of the doctrine. However, what Marion is attempting to caricaturise here is the inclination of human self-consciousness to apprehend and affirm being by localising it, situating it

⁶³² Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 113.

⁶³³ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 163.

⁶³⁴ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 114.

⁶³⁵ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 164.

somewhere as if it were *object*-like, thus *being* gets misconstrued with *space*. Such a perspective portrays being as to be somewhere. It implies that a substantial presence must ultimately be a local presence. This position emphasises God's presence in the Eucharistic elements, and therefore, confines it to a space like an object or thing. Of this 'God-made-thing', he writes that:

...one would expect precisely nothing but *real* presence: presence reduced to the dimensions of a thing, a thing that "honour[s] by its presence" the liturgies where community celebrates its own power...the collective self-satisfaction. Real presence: 'God' made thing, a hostage without significance, powerful because mute.⁶³⁶

Marion follows this caricature of the traditionalist position with an equally unflattering portrayal of progressive theological reflection on the Eucharist.⁶³⁷ He suggests that among progressives the concept of presence has been displaced from *thing* [Christ as captive in the tabernacle] to *community* [Christ as captive of the community].⁶³⁸ This position still presents a localised presence, but its meaning has changed. Marion states that presence for liberalists is a reality that inhabits the present consciousness of the collected self, thus, Christ is now the hostage of the celebrating assembly's consciousness with all "its meanings and goals, its struggles and searches, its social and political agendas."⁶³⁹

While Marion accepts that the theology of transubstantiation [traditionalist position] can lead to idolatry because it advocates the concept of 'substantial presence' which can confine God's presence in a "delimiting thing,"⁶⁴⁰ he ultimately dismisses critiques of transubstantiation claiming that they are founded upon "summary or inexact reflections on

⁶³⁶ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 164.

⁶³⁷ Ibid.

⁶³⁸ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 114.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 115.

⁶⁴⁰ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 164.

metaphysics.”⁶⁴¹ In fact, he suggests that theologies of transignification only bring about an awareness of God and are equally as metaphysical as the allegedly metaphysical theory of transubstantiation.⁶⁴² He argues that many recent theologies of Eucharistic presence have lapsed into greater dangers, “even insurmountable idolatry.”⁶⁴³ However, Ambrose claims that Marion’s defence of transubstantiation should not be dismissed as being merely a matter of conservative traditionalism.⁶⁴⁴ Rather, Marion accepts the historical relativism of all theological reflection. This emerges in his theology in statements such as, “the theology of transubstantiation has lost its legitimacy”⁶⁴⁵ or that Eucharistic theology requires a renewal of “norms of thought.”⁶⁴⁶ Yet, while Marion’s theology of the Eucharist converges at points with progressive theologies, namely Chauvet’s, it remains quite different, particularly concerning his understanding of the theory of transubstantiation.⁶⁴⁷

For Marion, the theology of transubstantiation should be respected and held as the measure for other theologies of Eucharistic presence.⁶⁴⁸ He emphasises that transubstantiation presents itself as “the fruit of ‘theological’ thought” and that it is therefore “anti-metaphysical.”⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴¹ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 163.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, 167-169.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁶⁴⁴ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 135.

⁶⁴⁵ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 166.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁶⁴⁷ Both Marion and Chauvet are in agreement on the point of respect for a theology of transubstantiation. Chauvet has made his appreciation of the concept clear when it is engaged with in its original context. However, Chauvet is of the opinion that Aquinas’s theology of transubstantiation in relation to the issue of Christ’s presence made the weaker claim compared to the ultra-realist theories which prevailed and were taught by the Church from the ninth to the thirteenth century. However, Ambrose suggest that in contemporary times Chauvet’s position could perhaps be seen as the weaker position, at least from Marion’s perspective, concerning the affirmation of presence. See, Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 135; Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 161-82.

⁶⁴⁸ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 165.

⁶⁴⁹ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 136. For Marion’s analysis of transignification as metaphysical and transubstantiation as anti-metaphysical, see especially, Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 167-69. However, to briefly shed some light on Marion’s argument on this point what this author will draw attention to is the fact that Marion associates a Lutheran/Hegelian theology, which he considers to be idolatrous, with transignification.

Like Chauvet, Marion perceives the Eucharist as way of ‘overcoming’ onto-theology. For both writers, the Eucharist is iconoclastic, at least in the sense that it should refute the inclination towards idolatry by putting us at a *distance*.⁶⁵⁰ For Marion, there is only one way to move beyond the impasse caused by the extreme polarization between traditionalists and progressives and that only way is to recall that “one cannot have or experience *presence* apart from *distance*, that one cannot have or experience *intimacy* apart from *boundaries*.”⁶⁵¹

Marion states that this *distance* makes communion and presence possible: “[O]nly distance, in maintaining a distinct separation of terms [of persons], renders communion possible, and immediately mediates the relation[ship].”⁶⁵² However, he claims that such *distance* can only be sustained by maintaining a theology of transubstantiation. He proposes that “transubstantiation directs the communities’ attention to something other than itself.”⁶⁵³ He states that by “becoming conscious of the thing where Eucharistic presence is embodied, the believing community does not become conscious of itself, but of the another, the Other par excellence.”⁶⁵⁴ Marion claims that the consecrated bread of the Eucharist represents an *irreducible exteriority* in which Christ makes the sacramental gift of Himself available to humankind without yielding to control *by* humankind.⁶⁵⁵ Hence, for Marion, a *distance* is better maintained when God’s presence is mediated through a material thing. He argues that without otherness [exteriority] there can be no presence, “availability without absence, or

⁶⁵⁰ Here, it is important to mention that what Marion refers to as *distance*, Chauvet refers to as *transitional space*. However, for Chauvet this *transitional space* can only be established by adopting a thankful attitude, whereas for Marion this *distance* can only be safeguard by transubstantiation.

⁶⁵¹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 115.

⁶⁵² Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 169. It is important to highlight that Chauvet would certainly refute such a gnostic intellectualism. Furthermore, it is unlikely that he would be as quick as Marion to portray all proposed alternatives to transubstantiation as utterly subjectivistic. However, in overcoming onto-theology Chauvet is not as focused on the Eucharist as Marion, nor is he as fixated on presence. Rather, he is equalled interested in absence whereas Marion appears to be much more concerned with maintaining distance between ourselves and that which mediates the presence of Christ.

⁶⁵³ Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 136.

⁶⁵⁴ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 168.

⁶⁵⁵ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 115.

intimacy without distance.”⁶⁵⁶ For him, the standard set by transubstantiation makes clear that an alternative theory would have to maintain distance between “consciousness and a thing independent of it.”⁶⁵⁷

In light of the above, the way in which Marion understands Eucharistic presence becomes clear. He states that Eucharistic presence:

...must be understood starting...from the present, *but the present must be understood first as a gift that is given*. One must measure the dimensions of Eucharistic presence against the fullness of gift. The principle weakness of reductionist interpretations [by conservatives or progressives] stems precisely from their exclusively anthropological...treatment of the Eucharist. They never...think presence starting from the gift that, theologically, constitutes presence in the presence.⁶⁵⁸

What Marion is proposing here is that time must be reinterpreted as gift. Mitchell also makes this point, stating that, for Marion, “what makes presence possible in the Eucharist is a divine-gift, rather than, the work of human hands.”⁶⁵⁹ Therefore, time itself needs to be understood “as meaning rather than measurement,”⁶⁶⁰ or “as content rather than chronology.”⁶⁶¹ Marion emphasises the importance of Eucharistic time. Unlike our everyday routines in which the presence of *things* require a location within a temporal and spatial coordinates, Eucharistic presence does not result from time as it is ordinarily understood. Marion states that, rather than occupying a location within time and space, the Eucharist *disrupts and subverts time*.⁶⁶² For him, in the Eucharist time is not determined, nor is it ordered, by the present. Instead, in the Eucharist the present [the here and now] is displaced

⁶⁵⁶ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 115.

⁶⁵⁷ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 169.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁶⁵⁹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 115.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 115-116.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, 116.

from its powerful role as the dictator of time's duration and significance.⁶⁶³ Hence, in the context of the Eucharist it emerges that traditional western philosophy's understanding of time is inadequate.

By subverting the powerful role of the present, the Eucharist shows us that "[T]ime must be understood according to the order of the gift; it must be understood as that which is given, rather than that which gives."⁶⁶⁴ The most important aspect of Marion's statement is his emphasis on understanding the Eucharist "according to the order of the gift."⁶⁶⁵ Unlike the concept of time in classical metaphysics which perceives the whole in terms of the present, the notion of time as 'gifted' understands the present in terms of the whole. Marion stresses that for him, "[T]he past determines the reality of the present [not vice versa] – better, the present is best understood as a today to which alone the memorial, as an actual pledge, gives meaning and reality."⁶⁶⁶

Loughlin accentuates this point by stressing that the Eucharistic presence, as memorial [*anamnesis*], is temporalized from the past, but not in a manner of remembering that is no longer, such a view would be thinking in terms of the present to the whole. Rather, "[I]n the Eucharist the people do not recall to mind the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, as if they might have forgotten this, but rather *remember before God that this event has not ceased to determine their day and future.*"⁶⁶⁷ Hence, the memorial dimension of the Eucharist must also be understood as "the pledge of an advent completed *from the future.*"⁶⁶⁸ In the

⁶⁶³ On this point, it is important to recall what had been said previously concerning the negative limits which time had been subjected to in western philosophy from Aristotle to Hegel. See especially, Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 133.

⁶⁶⁴ Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 134.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 173.

⁶⁶⁷ Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 134-35.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 135.

same way as the present is temporalized by the past, it is also temporalized by the future as *anticipation*.

Marion suggests that the Eucharist “anticipates what we will be, will see, will love...In this way, ‘sometimes the future lives in us without our knowing it’ [Marcel Proust].”⁶⁶⁹ Marion makes clear that what one understands as the present is determined by both the past and the future. For him, Eucharistic time has an integral eschatological dimension; thus, we cannot possibly *possess* the present when it is understood as gift. For Marion, “[W]hat we may call Eucharistic time – the Eucharistic present as moment and gift, temporalized from the past and the future, from the memorial and the anticipatory glory – is the paradigm of every present moment, of time as gift.”⁶⁷⁰ He emphasises that eschatological time is not chronological, but content, the presence that we profess in the Eucharist is just as concerned with the future as it is with the past and the present.⁶⁷¹

By affirming the Eucharist as a ‘pledge of future glory’ Marion evokes time as gift and a future that lives in us, intensely, even when it can not be seen, labelled or felt directly by us. Mitchell states that Marion’s thinking enables him to speak of how the Eucharistic prayer can “make memorial”⁶⁷² of a future that has not yet happened and of a past that is not past.⁶⁷³ The past, as it is understood ordinarily, belongs to the dead, but for Christians this understanding of time is subverted by the risen Christ. Such a radical understanding of the past is only plausible in light of the Crucified Christ who didn’t remain in the confines of death but rather rose from the dead, thus subverting time itself. For Marion, one does not take possession of the past and future in the Eucharist: it is them which take possession of us in the present.

⁶⁶⁹ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 174.

⁶⁷⁰ Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 135.

⁶⁷¹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 117.

⁶⁷² Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 174.

⁶⁷³ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 117.

Thus, in the Eucharistic celebration, “the reality of the present is determined by a past and a future that are always, already arriving.”⁶⁷⁴

From this standpoint, it is clear that one must learn to contemplate presence as “the gift which is governed by the memorial and *epektasis*.”⁶⁷⁵ Marion states that “each moment must befall us as a gift”⁶⁷⁶ as each instance of presence is imparted by charity from God. For Marion, this applies to the present time [gift given] as to manna. The manna of time becomes a daily reality for us, according to Marion, in what “the Christian names his ‘daily bread,’ firstly, because he receives the daily itself as bread, “a food whose reception, as a gift, no reserve will spare... [And so, therefore,] of time in the present...one must receive it as a present, in the sense of a gift.”⁶⁷⁷ For Marion, this implies that one should receive this present of the consecrated Bread as the gift, at each moment, of union with Christ.⁶⁷⁸ Therefore, in the Eucharist, metaphysical time is dispossessed and utterly eschatologized. The eschatological future and the memorialised past find their true and embodied sign in the Eucharist.⁶⁷⁹

Furthermore, for Marion the act of giving, that is, giving itself as body and blood “offered up for you” must be spoken of as an action permeated by love. Here, the centrality of the Cross in Marion’s theology becomes even more pronounced:

[T]he Son took in the body of humanity only in order to play humanly the Trinitarian game of love; for this reason also, he loved ‘to the end’ (Jn 13:1), that is, to *the Cross*; in order that

⁶⁷⁴ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 118.

⁶⁷⁵ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 174. For Marion, the Eucharist is the point of encounter with the figure of what we will be, that is, the gift that we cannot yet welcome, that which we cannot yet figure. This is why Marion enjoys citing the aphorism of Marcel Proust illustrated in his statement that “sometimes the future live in us without our knowing it.” This is precisely what Marion is referring to by the Greek term *epektasis*.

⁶⁷⁶ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 175.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ On this point Marion gives his response to Derrida’s challenge that a gift is impossible because every gift implies a return and every return implies restitution. His response to Derrida’s position is that “this [Eucharistic time] is a temporality where the present, always already anterior to and in anticipation of itself, is received to the extent that the past and the future, in the name of the Alpha and the Omega, give it.” Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 176. See also; Loughlin, “Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift,” 125.

the irrefutable demonstration of the death and resurrection not cease to provoke us, he gives himself with insistence in a body and blood that persist in each day that time imparts to us.⁶⁸⁰

Therefore, for Marion, the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist becomes the “ultimate icon of a love that delivers itself body and soul.”⁶⁸¹ In the Paschal meal, this is the love which advances to meet us,⁶⁸² even with the risk of being abhorred. For Marion, Christ’s taking of a sacramental body brings the Trinitarian process, the economy of salvation begun in the birth of Christ, to completion.⁶⁸³

Marion states that the purpose of the Eucharistic gift is *consumption*, “[T]he [Eucharistic] bread...is given only in order to feed; it is made present only to permit its consumption.”⁶⁸⁴ Yet, at the same time he attempts to leaves things open for Eucharistic contemplation and adoration.⁶⁸⁵ Here an important distinction must be made between ordinary food and the Eucharistic bread. When consuming ordinary food one transform’s it into one’s self, but when one eats the Eucharistic bread one is transformed into what one eats.⁶⁸⁶ In the Eucharist, we become Christ’s mystical body, His Church. Hence, what Marion calls ‘the drama of Trinitarian oblation’ does not reach its *coda* in the Eucharistic body thought of by itself, but in that “reality for which Christ’s Eucharistic body is given, the Church.”⁶⁸⁷ The body *on* the altar is there for the sake of those gathered *at* the table. He states that, “[T]he

⁶⁸⁰ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 177.

⁶⁸¹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 119.

⁶⁸² For rich discussion of the way in which one encounters Christ in mystery, see especially, Coleman E. O’Niell, *Meeting Christ in the Sacrament* (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1966).

⁶⁸³ On this point Marion states that “the sacramental body completes the oblation of the body, [an] oblation that incarnates the Trinitarian oblation.” See, Psalm 40:7, as translated by the Septuagint and quoted in Hebrews 10:5-10; also, see especially, Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 178.

⁶⁸⁴ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 178.

⁶⁸⁵ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 119.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.* Here, Marion is clearly utilising the famous dictum stated in Augustine’s *Confessions*, “I am the food of full-grown folk. Grow and you will consume me – though you will not change me into you, as you do with fleshly food; rather, you will be changed into me” (Book VII, 10, 16).

⁶⁸⁷ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 119.

bread and the wine must be consumed...so that our definitive union with the Father may be consummated in them, through communion with the ecclesiastical body of his Son.”⁶⁸⁸

Hence, Marion speaks of a threefold Eucharistic presence which we encounter sacramentally in time and space.

Firstly, Marion highlights the ‘present’ given to us as a succession of past events, which do not really belong to the past, the Paschal Mystery.⁶⁸⁹ Secondly, he notes that ‘present’ is given to us as an “eschatological future that is always, already arriving”⁶⁹⁰ taking possession of our present. This future is referred to by Christ as God’s reign which may erupt in our midst at any or every moment of life.⁶⁹¹ Thirdly, Marion outlines the ‘present’ which is the everyday gift of our days. This ‘present’ refers to time as a gift gratuitously given to us from God. Time flows from God’s love that continues to pour out upon humanity as a result of the Paschal Mystery. While all three of these interpretations of the present are included in his theology of real presence, they do not exhaust his understanding of the present as at the heart of presence is the risen Christ.⁶⁹² Mitchell states that it is with these insights that Marion perceives a legitimate or even necessary role for “Eucharistic devotion and contemplation.”⁶⁹³

⁶⁸⁸ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 179. See also; John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985); Patricia Fox, *God as Communion: John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson, and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2001).

⁶⁸⁹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 120.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.* Here, it is worth noting that this is the only verification of reception spoken of by Marion in relation to the objectivity of the sacrament, that is, the *living exchange* illustrated in the flow of gift, reception and return-gift. Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 138. On this point, Catherine Pickstock gives a rather sympathetic assessment of Marion’s understanding of Eucharistic presence. See especially, Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: The Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Malden: Blackwell, 1998), 225; "A Short Essay on the Reform of the Liturgy," *New Balckfriars* 78 (1997): 56-65; "The Sacred Polis: Language as Syncretic Event," *Literature & Theology* 8 (1994).

As was previously highlighted, Marion argues that Eucharistic theology cannot continue apart from a radical critique of self and a renewal of norms of thought. He states that the theologian's conversion:

...first requires prayer. In this sense, what we understand by the term 'Eucharistic contemplation'...assumes its true meaning: summoned to distance by the Eucharistic present [recall that one cannot have presence without distance; one cannot experience intimacy without boundaries],⁶⁹⁴ the one who prays undertakes to let [his or her] gaze be converted in it...In prayer, only an 'explanation' becomes possible, in other words, a struggle between human impotence to receive and the insistent humility to God to fulfil.⁶⁹⁵

For Marion, Eucharistic presence is not a reality that humankind can determine or generate by its own unaided powers. Rather, humankind has to accept their *distance* from it. Here, the importance which he places on distance becomes even more pronounced. As stated previously, Marion is critical of theologies that confine Christic presence, either to objects or in the community consciousness.⁶⁹⁶ However, for Marion, the doctrine of transubstantiation can help to overcome such impasses:

...the theology of transubstantiation alone offers the possibility of distance, since it strictly separates my consciousness from him who summons it. In the distance thus arranged, the Other summons, by his absolutely concrete sacramental body [a body that we cannot 'produce' or 'invent'], my attention and my prayer.⁶⁹⁷

From the above, it is clear that Marion has reconfigured transubstantiation in such a way that it circumvents the claims of a metaphysical critique. His presentation of transubstantiation has the merit of marking the unbridgeable difference between humankind and the divine

⁶⁹⁴ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 120-21.

⁶⁹⁵ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 177.

⁶⁹⁶ Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 130.

⁶⁹⁷ Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 177.

Other. In what follows, it will be observed that his intentions are not all that different from those of Louis-Marie Chauvet in that both theologians affirm that Christ's presence is should not be considered stagnant in an object or disconnected from the ecclesial body.⁶⁹⁸ Mitchell states this exteriority [distance] "makes intimacy possible by guaranteeing that otherness is not swallowed up by the devouring self of a community's consciousness, will and attention."⁶⁹⁹ However, it must be recognised that Marion's desire to guarantee the *irreducible exteriority* of Christ's Eucharistic presence can be explained by theologies other than transubstantiation.

Here, the author would suggest that the influence of the twentieth century retrieval of mystery emerges quite clearly as Marion attempts to speak in of presence in way that communicates that this *mystery* exceeds the comprehension and linguistic capabilities of humankind. However, it must be noted that Marion places an understanding of the Cross that identifies only with Jesus' death at the centre of his theology. Such discourse does not engage in a profound way with Jesus' resurrection because it fails to recognise Jesus' resurrection as an inexhaustible source of meaning and insight for theological engagement with the Eucharist, especially concerning His real presence. At this point it is worth considering Chauvet's sacramentology and his controversial, yet significantly influential, critique of scholastic theology. Chauvet criticises scholastic theology for its dependency on the notion of causality and suggests that such an approach can be overcome by a greater appreciation of symbolic exchange.

⁶⁹⁸ However, as will be demonstrated in our analysis of Chauvet's theology of the Eucharist, it would appear that Chauvet by considering Eucharist in terms of symbolic exchange has come to uncover a better balance between the objective and subjective dimensions of sacramentality. That is to say that, Marion's allegiance to a theology of transubstantiation and the sacrificial priesthood appears to betray him as he is not as inclined as Chauvet to give a more ambiguous status to the Eucharist as icon. That is, when he comes to examine the Eucharistic icon the 'objective demands' receive the majority of his attention. See especially, Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, 169, 181

⁶⁹⁹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 121.

4.4. Louis-Marie Chauvet

4.4.1. Overcoming the Notion of Causality with Symbolic Mediation

The theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet presents perhaps the most critical post-conciliar perspective of scholastic theologies of the Eucharist, especially the theology of Aquinas and his dependency on the category of cause.⁷⁰⁰ In his *Symbol and Sacrament*,⁷⁰¹ Chauvet attempts to reimagine both fundamental and sacramental theology from the standpoint of symbolic mediation. The initial question of his treatise can be formulated as follows: “[H]ow did it come about that, when attempting to comprehend theologically the sacramental relation with God expressed most fully under the term ‘grace’, the Scholastics singled out for privileged consideration the category of cause?”⁷⁰² For Chauvet, this scholastic perspective cannot speak of being except in terms of production because this perspective emanates from a notion of universal being that underlines all being. According to Chauvet, the notion of causality fails to appreciate the singularity of events or what is disclosed in events as “all things are reduced to particular realizations of what is the general [the universal notion which underline all beings].”⁷⁰³ Chauvet develops this criticism from his critique of Plato’s *Philebus*.⁷⁰⁴

In *Philebus*, Plato describes how Socrates attempts to demonstrate the superiority of wisdom over pleasure, of *ousia* [existence] over *genesis* [process].⁷⁰⁵ Here, Socrates illustrates the superiority of *ousia* by suggesting that the relationship between an infatuated lover and the

⁷⁰⁰ For a useful and concise overview of Aquinas theology, see especially, Rik van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to Medieval Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 171-210.

⁷⁰¹ Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1995).

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁰³ David Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalising the Tradition* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd, 1992), 280.

⁷⁰⁴ Plato, *Philebus*, trans. J.C.B Gosling (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

⁷⁰⁵ Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 257; Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 38-56.

beloved is akin to the relationship between a ship and a ship-builder. Shipbuilding is for the sake of ships and not vice versa. Similar to shipbuilding, which serves only to produce ships, the infatuated lover *produces* the beloved. Analogously, the beloved is in a state of perfection unlike the infatuated lover. Chauvet claims that such an analogy is inaccurate. For him, it is simply untrue to claim that a lover *produces* the beloved. He states that, “[T]he lover only causes the other to exist *as a beloved*, and thus capable of making a *response in return*...The beloved is precisely a product that is *not finished* [unlike the ship].”⁷⁰⁶ Chauvet claims that it makes little sense to speak of causality concerning the relationship between a lover and the beloved. For him, the response of the beloved arises from his/her heart and not from the action of the lover. Bernhard Blankenhorn states that Chauvet applies this principle to “the relationship between God and the believer as well as to the realm of sacramental efficacy.”⁷⁰⁷

Chauvet claims that Plato’s view that process [*genesis*] is subservient to existence [*ousia*] can be perceived as the starting point of the long history of ‘onto-theology’, “in which being is the common trait of all entities and....God is treated only from the perspective of causality and foundation.”⁷⁰⁸ For Chauvet, this perspective presents the metaphysical background which guided Aquinas’s theology of sacramental efficacy, “the ontological presupposition that structured his and all of the scholastics’ culture.”⁷⁰⁹

Chauvet argues that Aquinas inevitably accepts the logic of Plato’s *Philebus* and consequently the perspective of “God as first cause, absolute foundation, and presence, thus

⁷⁰⁶ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 24.

⁷⁰⁷ Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 258.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid. See also; Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 26-28.

⁷⁰⁹ Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 258; Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 8.

interpreting the lover-beloved relationship through Socrates's analogy of shipbuilding."⁷¹⁰ Chauvet's first major critique of Aquinas is that: "the notion of causality in the sacraments proceeds from the shipbuilding analogy for the relationship of love."⁷¹¹ He argues that such a model for love is unsuccessful and emphasises that "the metaphysical language of production and causality has no place in the order of love."⁷¹² For Chauvet, the truly human that is revealed in realities such as love, joy and pleasure must not be understood as caused. He states that causality implies "producing by reason of the action of one upon the other."⁷¹³ For him, this manner of human *coming to be* can only be represented symbolically in its gratuitous emergence, within the world of meaning expressed in language, symbol and rite."⁷¹⁴ Chauvet uses this paradigm for the order of grace and sacramental action.

Chauvet's second criticism of Aquinas follows directly from the first and concerns the scholastic understanding of the sacraments as instrumental causes that *produce* grace. According to Chauvet, grace is not a thing or object-like. He refutes Aquinas' proposition that the sacraments produce grace as if grace was a thing, a work, something of value, something that the artist represented in his mind and then made or crafted with an instrument"⁷¹⁵ as being untenable. As maintained by Chauvet, the logic of causality devalues grace and "runs contrary to the reality of the interpersonal and gratuitous order where grace belongs."⁷¹⁶ He emphasises that the gratuitousness of God cannot be measured or calculated, as grace refutes or defies the logic of the marketplace and production as it is what he calls a

⁷¹⁰ Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 258.

⁷¹¹ Ibid. See also; Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 44.

⁷¹² Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 258.

⁷¹³ Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalising the Tradition*, 280.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

⁷¹⁵ Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 258.

⁷¹⁶ Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalising the Tradition*, 280. See also; Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 44-45.

“non-value.”⁷¹⁷ Chauvet argues that grace cannot be considered as a finished product, not even as spiritual product.⁷¹⁸ Hence, his disagreement with Aquinas’ theology of sacramental causality is based on the fact that Aquinas treats grace as an object of value, a thing that is produced. However, the revision of thought and language which Chauvet calls for also concerns the way we speak about God.

Chauvet argues that sacramentology must be freed, not only of the conception of producing grace, but also from the notion of God as self-cause and first cause of all things. According to Chauvet, to use such instrumentalist language about God is to consider “divinity within an order of beings and to risk taking a univocal understanding of being as the ground for thinking about God.”⁷¹⁹ Chauvet argues that such engagement runs contrary to the biblical origins of Christian God-language. However, nowhere in *Symbol and Sacrament* does Chauvet engage with the biblical background to Aquinas’ causal language.⁷²⁰ In fact, in his critique of Aquinas and other classical thinkers, he passes over the scriptures in total silence.⁷²¹ Here it is important to highlight Chauvet’s third criticism of Aquinas, which centres on his connection between Christology and the sacraments.

According to Chauvet, in Aquinas’s theology Christ’s power to instrumentally cause grace is grounded in the hypostatic union and continues to operate through the sacraments.⁷²² He argues that this approach is unsatisfactory as “a sacramental theology conceived primarily on the basis of the hypostatic union...cannot be inserted into the movement of concrete

⁷¹⁷ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 45.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 108-09.

⁷¹⁹ Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalising the Tradition*, 280.

⁷²⁰ See especially, Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 281-82.

⁷²¹ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 7-45.

⁷²² Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 259.

history.”⁷²³ In the Gospels “God is shown to enter history in the gratuitous manifestation of the Cross.”⁷²⁴ Chauvet argues that this “divine epiphany defies the causal and providential explanation of event and history.”⁷²⁵ For him, it “symbolically represents the advent of God in the midst of human suffering, simply as a presence of one who offers love as gift and invites response.”⁷²⁶ Hence, Chauvet claims that Aquinas has moved away from the theology of the Church Fathers with their dynamic theology of the sacraments as mysteries and toward an apprehension of the sacraments as continuations of the hypostatic union.⁷²⁷ For Chauvet, the symbolism of the exchange of gifts enriches an understanding of the Eucharist better than the notion of sacrifice⁷²⁸ as ‘immolative cultic activity, in fact done away with through the death of Jesus.’⁷²⁹

Chauvet perceives symbolic exchange as being truer to an original anthropological understanding of sacrifice. In fact, his real intention is to be rid of the notion of sacrifice as immolation. Chauvet strove to express the relation between God and humankind in gratuitous terms which appreciate the free response of the human person. He understands this approach to be contrary to the terminology of causality and the image of sacrificial immolation.

⁷²³ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 456.

⁷²⁴ Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalising the Tradition*, 280.

⁷²⁵ Ibid. It is interesting to note that Blankenhorn highlights that Chauvet throughout *Symbol and Sacrament* implies an opposition between metaphysics and history. See; Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 259.

⁷²⁶ Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalising the Tradition*, 280.

⁷²⁷ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 456. See also; Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 259.

⁷²⁸ Chauvet emphasises the Eucharist as thanksgiving rather than sacrifice. His contention with the sacrifice follows much the same trajectory as the earlier work of René Girard. For instance see, René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); *The Scapegoat* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); James G. Williams, ed. *The Girard Reader* (New York: Crossroad, 1996); René Girard, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, trans. Michael Metteer (Stanford 1987). Furthermore, for an excellent study of Chauvet’s treatment of the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist, see especially; Michael Kirwan, "Eucharist and Sacrifice," *New Blackfriars* 88, no. 1014 (2007): 213-27. See also; Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcoming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 139-49.

⁷²⁹ Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalising the Tradition*, 280-81.

Chauvet's theological method emerges clearly in his article *The Broken Bread as Theological Figure of Eucharistic Presence*:⁷³⁰ "[T]heology... has its task to express the mystery of God revealed in Jesus Christ with new freshness in the cultural categories of a time,"⁷³¹ an assertion that explains why "we can no longer think of the Eucharistic mystery in the wake of metaphysical theology or classical onto-theology."⁷³²

Chauvet maintains that over-coming causal language in relation to the sacraments requires an acceptance of the fact that in the Eucharist the initiative of God is affirmed, and yet at the same time there is no constraint on the believer to agree that this should be so. According to Chauvet, "as God is present in the free gift of Christ's Pasch and of the Spirit, so the Church responds freely with its own gift."⁷³³ He argues that the most fruitful way to overcome the productionist approach, which emphasises the category of cause is by way of appreciating in a more anthropological manner the power of symbolic mediation in terms of symbolic exchange,⁷³⁴ that is, the symbolism of the exchange of gifts in the Eucharist.⁷³⁵ In his sacramentology, Chauvet uses the dynamics of inter-human communication and the gift as his basic paradigm.⁷³⁶ He perceives language as a mediator *not* an instrument. He claims that when this point is accepted one can truly express the mystery freely revealed by God in Jesus in a richer way, in a manner that is more attentive to the context in which one is *doing* theology today. Hence, Chauvet claims that one needs to replace "an onto-theological logic

⁷³⁰ Louis-Marie Chauvet, "The Broken Bread as Theological Figure of Eucharistic Presence," in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, ed. Lieven Boeve and Lambert Leijssen (Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2001).

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, 239

⁷³³ Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalising the Tradition*, 280-81.

⁷³⁴ Lieven Boeve, "Theology in a Postmodern Context and the Hermeneutical Project of Louis-Marie Chauvet," in *Sacraments Revelation of the Humanity of God: Engaging the Fundamental Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet*, ed. Philippe Bordeyne and Bruce T. Morrill (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008), 7-8.

⁷³⁵ Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 117-28.

⁷³⁶ Boeve, "Theology in a Postmodern Context and the Hermeneutical Project of Louis-Marie Chauvet," 7-8.

of the Same...with a symbolic representation of the Other.”⁷³⁷ However, there are problems with Chauvet’s critique of Aquinas’s theology.

Chauvet’s critique of Aquinas presupposes the view that static Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies with their mechanistic, casual apprehension of God dictate Aquinas’s theological reflection. It will be observed later when discussing Herbert McCabe’s theology, that to read Aquinas’ theology in the way that Chauvet does is inaccurate.⁷³⁸ Chauvet fails to recognise that Aquinas does not develop his thinking in strict accordance with Platonic or Aristotelian philosophy. This implies that Chauvet has misinterpreted Aquinas, especially when one observes his failure to engage with Aquinas’s more mature theology evident in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*⁷³⁹ and the scriptural background to Aquinas’s causal language.⁷⁴⁰

While these points are significant they do not assume that Chauvet’s theology is totally dismantled. Rather, in the same manner as Bernhard Blankenhorn, this writer believes that Chauvet’s insights concerning sacramental symbolism and efficacy could be integrated into

⁷³⁷ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 45.

⁷³⁸ For example, on a separate issue raised by Chauvet in his critique of Aquinas in which he argue that Aquinas presents a theology that is non-patristic, it is significant to highlight that Edward Schillebeeckx emphasises the patristic roots of Aquinas’ theology in his doctrinal dissertation. Here, Schillebeeckx notes that Aquinas was the only medieval theologian that taught the patristic doctrine that the historical mysteries of Christ are really active in the sacraments. See especially, Edward Schillebeeckx, *L’économie Sacramentelle Du Salut*, trans. OSB Yvon van der Have (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2004), 131-40. See also, Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 288-91.

⁷³⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentile, 3:I*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975); *Summa Contra Gentiles, 3:II*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).

⁷⁴⁰ See especially, Liam G. Walsh, "Sacraments," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 326-61; Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 260-93; Dominic Holtz, "Sacraments," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 448-56; Rik Van Nieuwenhove, "Gadamer, Art, and Contemplation How to Make Sense of Sacraments on an Allegedly Post-Metaphysical World," *Louvain Studies* 38 (2014): 116; John D. O'Connor, "Expansive Naturalism and the Justification of Metaphysics in Sacramental Theology," *New Blackfriars* 84, no. 989-990 (2003): 361-69; Michael Rota, "Causation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 104-12.

Aquinas's vision of sacramental causality.⁷⁴¹ The sacraments effect what they signify and our participation in the whole Paschal Mystery is signified above all in them, but they signify more than that. Blankenhorn states that "the heart of sacramental signification and efficacy is the manifestation and causality of sanctifying grace."⁷⁴² Hence, all that is ordered in the direction of "the signification, causality, and effort of sanctification"⁷⁴³ could possibly be integrated into sacramentality in a particular manner. From this standpoint, there would appear to be no reason to exclude the realization and symbolization of the existential transformations that Chauvet suggest as secondary aspects of the sacraments as "they can share in the analogous unity of sacramental signification and efficacy"⁷⁴⁴ that Aquinas has outlined. However, such an integration of Chauvet's insights would demand deeper consideration. While this point is not of central concern to our discussion of presence, it does highlight the importance of Chauvet's contribution to the further development of contemporary sacramentology.

Although Chauvet's critique suffers from a misreading of Aquinas, his theology presents a significant methodological insight for contemporary sacramental theologians. Chauvet's theology emphasises a fundamental principle: that their reflections must begin with the liturgical action itself and not with a definition of the sacraments.⁷⁴⁵ Chauvet states that present-day theologians must adopt a phenomenological approach to the sacraments akin to that of Heidegger in relation to being.⁷⁴⁶ While Blankenhorn agrees that Chauvet's method

⁷⁴¹ Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 292.

⁷⁴² Ibid.

⁷⁴³ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁵ Prétot, "The Sacraments as "Celebrations of the Church": Liturgy's Impact on Sacramental Theology," 25-41. See also; Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 292. Here, I would suggest that the influence of Casel can be seen, that is, his move away from a theological fixation with rubrics for an approach to the liturgy that centred on what is *done* in the liturgy.

⁷⁴⁶ Here, it is interesting highlight a significant critique put forward by Rik Van Nieuwenhove concerning the phenomenological approach taken by Chauvet concerning the sacraments. Utilising the insight of Gadamer, who

could be fruitful, he points out that one can only begin to understand Christian acts of worship when they are placed in their theological and historical context. Blankenhorn claims that a sacramental theology should be developed by reflecting on the liturgical celebration and Scripture and Tradition *together*, as otherwise an approach would become decontextualized.⁷⁴⁷ To approach the liturgy in a decontextualized way separates theology from history; it refutes the mediated nature of the knowledge that we acquire from liturgical worship and confines theology to an immanent present causing it to lapse into the onto-theological trap.⁷⁴⁸ Thus, Blankenhorn claims that while phenomenology approach alone is not enough, Chauvet's theology presents a revitalised appreciation of importance of experience to an understanding of the Eucharist.⁷⁴⁹

4.4.2. *Language as Symbolic Exchange and the Sanctuary of Being*

Integral to Chauvet's 'overcoming of onto-theology' is his paradigm for sacramentology which has a rich appreciation for the linguistic mediation of the human experience of grace and ultimately of sacramental presence at its centre. For him, language is "the medium in and by which all speaking, thinking, and acting takes place, the space in which speakers, thinkers,

draws upon Heidegger, Nieuwenhove suggest that the subjectivisation of our liturgical experience is an unwelcome reductionism. He proposes that thinkers such as Chauvet who claim to follow Heidegger in their theology appear to ignore the way in which both Heidegger and his student Gadamer actually critique subjectivisation and experientialism. He highlights that for Gadamer mere signification does not capture the mystery of being and that this too pertains to our liturgical experiences. For Nieuwenhove, the way in which writers such as Chauvet play out metaphysics against signification is unsatisfactory. Moreover, he emphasises the apophatic character of Aquinas' theology especially in relation to his definition between God as being and *esse commune*. Following from this point, he protests against the onto-theological charge directed at Aquinas. Finally, he suggest that for writers such as Chauvet to play out signification against causality when considering Aquinas' theology makes little sense as for him they go hand in hand. Hence, Nieuwenhove proposes that to engage with our sacramental experiences of the risen Christ in such a subjective manner reduces or takes away from the mystery of being which dynamically manifests itself in the liturgical worship. See especially; Nieuwenhove, "Gadamer, Art, and Contemplation How to Make Sense of Sacraments on an Allegedly Post-Metaphysical World," 111-25.

⁷⁴⁷ See especially, Irwin, *Context and Text: Method in Liturgical Theology*, 44-74.

⁷⁴⁸ Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," 292.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

and agents are already situated and by which they are constituted.”⁷⁵⁰ Hence, for him, language is best understood as the sanctuary of being.⁷⁵¹ He states that being is dynamic: it is a living reality that both illuminates and animates humanity. Chauvet claims that participating in Being situates use on a path towards *something*. Then, if Being features a journey, it is language that presents us with the way in which we embark on this journey. For Chauvet, “language is the construct, the gift, where humans can live, can be.”⁷⁵² For him, to be human is to encounter or be confronted by language, by signs, by all things given to the human person in any particular moment of time to create a picture in which s/he can exist.

Language reveals the potentiality for human existence in a manner that constitutes the human person as subject and situates him/her in a position of infinite response. Human beings are subjects which are always in dialogue with reality. Chauvet emphasises that in order *to be* it is necessary that “we move into language, to always be on the way toward language, and to recognise that language precedes our existence as a human.”⁷⁵³ Megan Willis states that “Chauvet’s adaption of ‘symbolic exchange’ to language allows us to consider what it means for subjects to have a meaningful exchange with one another in the realm of the sign.”⁷⁵⁴ Therefore, if one is to fully understand how Chauvet perceives language as symbolic exchange, one must come to terms with the way in which he describes a possible divine motivation for making us living subjects capable of exchange.

According to Chauvet, language as a symbolic exchange must be understood in light of the respective subjects who are in essence exchanging themselves and not simply in light of the

⁷⁵⁰ Boeve, "Theology in a Postmodern Context and the Hermeneutical Project of Louis-Marie Chauvet," 8.

⁷⁵¹ Megan L. Willis, "Language as the Sanctuary of Being: A Theological Exploration with Louis-Marie Chauvet," *The Heythrop Journal* 51, no. 5 (2010): 872-80.

⁷⁵² Willis, "Language as the Sanctuary of Being: A Theological Exploration with Louis-Marie Chauvet," 875. See also; Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 55.

⁷⁵³ Willis, "Language as the Sanctuary of Being: A Theological Exploration with Louis-Marie Chauvet," 875.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 876.

signs that are given.⁷⁵⁵ For Chauvet, when we are ascertaining our being in language, it emerges that “we are *for each other*, we are for a dynamic reality allowing an infinite capacity in a vast unifying scheme.”⁷⁵⁶ He states that:

[W]hat is transpiring in symbolic exchange is of the same order as what is transpiring in language ... ‘every word, as important as its referential and informative value may be, arises also from an awareness of ‘who I am for you and who you are for me’ and is operative in this field’ ... it is a matter of a reversible recognition of each other as fully *subject*.⁷⁵⁷

Similar to his understanding of ‘grace’, Chauvet understands language as a ‘non-value’. This raises the point: why do we live in a world that is mediated linguistically? Here, one can get to the heart of Chauvet emphasis on language as symbolic exchange because it highlights a deeper understanding of existential subjectivity concerning divine presence. By engaging with this question one comes to recognise who it is that addresses us in the face of the Other. For Chauvet, the face of the Other is God, the wholly Other who addresses us. In essence, we talk because God wants to talk to us.

Chauvet turns the reader’s attention to John’s Gospel where the Word is identified as the Son of God. The evangelist explains that the Word is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man who always exists as part of a triune divinity. In creation, as the Word was being spoken, the Word was also speaking and enacting His own creative acts by calling creation into being. In John 1:1-5 we read that through the Word of God creation is spoken, and that which comes into being “is life... and life was the light of men.” This point highlights that what has come into being in Him and from Him is *life*, something *other* than Him. Language then is given so that we may live, for to live is to be called into being in language, to

⁷⁵⁵ Willis, "Language as the Sanctuary of Being: A Theological Exploration with Louis-Marie Chauvet," 876. See also, Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 101.

⁷⁵⁶ Willis, "Language as the Sanctuary of Being: A Theological Exploration with Louis-Marie Chauvet," 876.

⁷⁵⁷ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 106-07.

exchange ourselves with the Other. Willis states that “[L]anguage is the light that mediates the truth of the Word, our origin, to all people.”⁷⁵⁸

According to Willis, for Chauvet, it is at creation that the Word speaks *me-for-you* and *you-for-me* with such eloquence that the “nothingness itself responds ‘Amen’.”⁷⁵⁹ It is with and in this reply that the sanctuary of exchange comes into existence, and humankind comes to be infinitely addressed as ‘beloved’ as humankind is the recipient of the self-gift of God. The way in which creation comes into being provides both implication and shape as to why we encompass *words* or creations that come *to speak*. Here, the historical reality of the Word manifests itself in our humanity which is the venue of the Divine expression of love. In creation, by giving humankind a voice, God establishes human beings not only as subjects who exchange with one another, but as subjects who engage in loving exchange with God. Of primary concern for Chauvet is the gratuitous nature in which language is given. He argues that humankind receives and responds to the Divine self-gift by participating in language. Hence, the manner in which the Word is given provides the only avenue for encounter with the Divine presence or the Word [subject] who expresses Himself in history, in the realm of time and place.

For Chauvet, the gift not only evokes: it actively calls for a response. However, it does not do so in the same way that it was given, but as an act of self-exchange. The Word not only speaks our existence and establishes our life, but rather enters into our linguistic reality to be mediated: “God’s self is literally translated into humanity.”⁷⁶⁰ Chauvet claims that humankind is invited to respond to His divine presence in the same vehicle which He utilised to reveal Himself. This vehicle is language, which always points us to the Word that is our

⁷⁵⁸ Willis, "Language as the Sanctuary of Being: A Theological Exploration with Louis-Marie Chauvet," 876.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., 877.

genesis.⁷⁶¹ Therefore, the language of this divine-gift *precedes* us and *exchanges* with us. It leads us into the depths of our humanity and the nature of our origin.⁷⁶² While language is of the central importance for Chauvet sacramentology, there is another aspect of his theology that must also be discussed, i.e. the way in which his understanding of presence is characterised by an indispensable receptivity to absence.

4.4.3. *A Presence of Absence: An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation*

Chauvet's understanding of divine presence is characterised as a presence of absence.⁷⁶³ For him, each presence bears within it an abyss of absence.⁷⁶⁴ His receptivity to absence is evident throughout his Eucharistic theology and is largely influenced by events which took place during the period of the Church described in the accounts of Luke-Acts.⁷⁶⁵ For Chauvet, the way in which Jesus no longer walks with the disciples', yet the community which He brought together still comes to experience His presence after his death, is significant. Chauvet claims that the way in which one apprehends this presence is integral to an understanding of Christ's presence in the Eucharist.

He argues that the disciples' experience of Jesus' presence after His death is necessarily connected to the recognition of His absence and emphasises that modern theologians must also recognise this absence, pointing out that scholastic theologies of the Eucharist were not

⁷⁶¹ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 87-88.

⁷⁶² Ibid. See also, Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, 143. Here, Chauvet highlights the importance of the Eucharistic prayer for our self-exchange with God. See also; Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcomming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 110-28; Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalising the Tradition*, 306-11; Joy Harrell Blaylock, "Ghislain Lafont and Contemporary Sacramental Theology," *Theological Studies* 66, no. 4 (2005): 844-54. Also, it is important to highlight the import of David N. Powers theology of the Eucharist as 'Language-Event' in which the role of the Eucharistic prayers occupy an integral aspect of his thinking in which he utilised much of Chauvet's insights, yet, he does pass over the resurrection in total silence. See especially, Power, *Sacrament: The Language of God*, 5-7, 75-76, 85-87, 310.

⁷⁶³ Donald P. Gray, "Real Absence: A Note on the Eucharist," *Worship* 44, no. 1 (1970): 20-26.

⁷⁶⁴ Vincent J. Miller, "An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation: Louis-Marie Chauvet's Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality," *Horizons* 24, no. 2 (1997): 234-35.

⁷⁶⁵ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 161-77; Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcomming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 97.

receptive of this fact. Chauvet emphasises that in such reflections “the epistemological assumption of immediate presence translates into a triumphalist ecclesiology that assumes a direct connection between Christ and the Church.”⁷⁶⁶ He proposes that humankind has no immediate, transparent access to reality or to itself. For Chauvet, the only access that one has is mediated symbolically and suggests that the primordality of this point emerges when one considers human embodiment.

Similar to language, the human body is not the instrument of an independent consciousness. Rather, it is the condition for the very being of that consciousness. According to Chauvet, embodiment entails contingency as human consciousness is intimately connected to a specific time and place. Therefore, it is always shaped by a certain language, culture, social status and physical environment.⁷⁶⁷ Chauvet considers the body to be the “arch-symbol”⁷⁶⁸ as it demonstrates “the nature and inescapability of symbolic mediation.”⁷⁶⁹ He maintains that the human body is the preeminent and primordial symbol of human existence and argues that although our human body does not make subjects immediately present to us, it is still our only access to other subjects. Integral to Chauvet’s understanding of presence is the fact that “the presence of another is always accompanied by an absence.”⁷⁷⁰ He claims that if it is the flesh that mediates then it is also the flesh which separates. Hence, the Other is always beyond our grasp. For Chauvet, all symbols operate in this manner. In their making making-present, symbols are always accompanied by an unbridgeable absence.

⁷⁶⁶ Miller, "An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation: Louis-Marie Chauvet's Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality," 232; See also, Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 153, 72, 88.

⁷⁶⁷ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 149.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid., 111, 151.

⁷⁶⁹ Miller, "An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation: Louis-Marie Chauvet's Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality," 233.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

Chauvet suggests that this unbridgeable absence or “difference” is the space of symbolic action in which knowledge is mediated symbolically. Such action possesses a character of inadequacy in that what is mediated is remains forever partial and beyond our grasp.⁷⁷¹ At the heart of this mediation there rests an abyss of absence, a “difference” which prevents us from any direct access to reality. Chauvet refers to this absence as the “law of mediation, the law of the body.”⁷⁷² His conception of symbolic mediation attempts to construct a way of thinking which operates within the “difference” between reality and representation, that is, between language or symbols, and that which they mediate. This approach does not refute the possibility of presence; rather it asserts that presence is always mediated. Thus, any presence, including divine presence, bears within it an abyss of absence. When presence is understood in this manner it is not amendable to possession because when one attempts to “embrace it, it eludes our grasp.”⁷⁷³ From this perspective, Chauvet engages with Christ’s presence in the Church and the Eucharist.

The Emmaus account in Luke’s Gospel (Lk 24:13-35) is central to Chauvet’s reflection on the mediation of presence and the recognition of absence. He refers to this period of the Church as the time of Christ’s absence.⁷⁷⁴ In the Emmaus story the disciples come to recognise Christ, not in a human body, but in the breaking of the bread (Lk 24:35). Hence, for Chauvet, Christ’s presence is mediated through the symbolic order of the Church in the Holy Spirit. He asserts that this presence too bears within it an abyss of absence. For him, “the Church is the presence of the absence of Christ.”⁷⁷⁵ He argues that to ignore this absence in

⁷⁷¹ Here, one can see a point of similarity between Chauvet and Marion. That is, what it is that Chauvet refers to as “difference” is akin to what Marion call’s “distance”. Miller, "An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation: Louis-Marie Chauvet's Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality," 233.

⁷⁷² Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 151.

⁷⁷³ Miller, "An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation: Louis-Marie Chauvet's Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality," 235.

⁷⁷⁴ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 174.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 174, 189.

the ecclesial body of Christ would reduce the body of Christ to a lifeless corpse.⁷⁷⁶ Chauvet proposes that one must abandon the desire to “see, touch and find” the body of Christ.⁷⁷⁷ This affirmation is fundamental to Chauvet’s Eucharistic theology. He claims that one must now understand the Eucharistic body as “a sign of the lost and impossible presence of Jesus.”⁷⁷⁸

Vincent Miller states that this unavoidable tension between presence and absence permits symbolic mediation to “grant real knowledge and real continuity to the Christian tradition and the limits of this mediation chasten any triumphalistic, totalist assertions that the receivers of this mediation may be want to make.”⁷⁷⁹ In his sacramentology, Chauvet uses the verb “*buter*” and its associated noun “*butée*.”⁷⁸⁰ Miller states that while these words directly translate as “to stumble” or “stumbling block,” behind these primary meanings is the “connotations of support as in an architectural ‘abutment’.”⁷⁸¹ He suggests that symbolic mediation can be understood as being a “real support for the Christian tradition and experience and a stumbling block that obstructs the immediate presence for which humans long.”⁷⁸² Miller also claims that one can read Chauvet’s view of the sacraments as follows: “[O]ne stumbles [depends] upon the sacraments, as one stumbles [depends] on the body, as

⁷⁷⁶ Miller, "An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation: Louis-Marie Chauvet's Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality," 236. Chauvet outlines several way in which Christians are continuously tempted to ignore the absence of Christ and thus attempt to confine His presence within their ideological ‘nets’. See especially, Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 173-78.

⁷⁷⁷ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 172.

⁷⁷⁸ Antoine Delzant, "L'eucharistie Considérée Á Partir D'une Théologie Fondamentale," *La Maison-Dieu* 137 (1979): 21.

⁷⁷⁹ Miller, "An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation: Louis-Marie Chauvet's Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality," 236.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid. See also, Ambrose, *The Theology of Louis-Marie Chauvet: Overcomming onto-Theology with the Sacramental Tradition*, 97-107. Here, Ambrose provides a penetrating exploration of Chauvet’s use of Luke-Acts in relation to Chauvet’s interpretation of Jesus’ resurrection appearances as passages of faith, that is, a passage from non-recognition to recognition of Christ’s presence after his death. Furthermore, he also gives a detailed consideration of Chauvet’s theology of the Cross and his implicit distinction between Jesus of Nazareth and Jesus Christ. This distinction does not suggest that they are two different people, but rather, recognises the uniqueness of our experience of Christ’s presence now after his death in faith.

⁷⁸¹ Miller, "An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation: Louis-Marie Chauvet's Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality," 236

⁷⁸² Ibid.

one stumbles [depends] on the institution, as one stumbles [depends] on the letter of the Scriptures...⁷⁸³ For Chauvet, this paradoxical notion finds its central Christian expression in the elementary *butée* which is the Cross.⁷⁸⁴

According to Chauvet, the sacraments themselves, especially the Eucharist, also exemplify this dialectic. He states that, “[T]he Eucharistic presence of the Saviour is the exemplary expression of the *resistance* of God’s mystery to every attempt by the subject to appropriate it.”⁷⁸⁵ The Eucharist is the pinnacle occurrence of the *butée*, a presence that is “inscribed but never circumscribed.”⁷⁸⁶ Therefore, for Chauvet, the Church only comes into existence with the absence of Christ and the presence that it mediates is always a presence of absence. The Church dwells on the symbolic breach and at the centre of this “difference” is the Eucharist. He states that it is the difference which gives life, but “it is *the bread of absence* [the Eucharist] which nourishes us.”⁷⁸⁷ Chauvet insists that Christians must open themselves to the sacraments, especially to the Eucharist, in an attitude of gracious “letting-be” or of “letting-oneself-be-spoken.” He claims that it is only then that the richness of our experiences of the risen Christ in the Eucharist can to be recognised and appreciated.

4.5. Brief Synopsis

It is clear from the above discussion that the revitalised sense of mystery which emerged in the twentieth century has exerted significant effect on post-conciliar theologies of the Eucharist. From our reading of Marion and Chauvet it is evident that Casel’s influence is still apparent in post-conciliar theology. Both Marion and Chauvet has emphasised that sacramentology must begin with the liturgical rite itself and each has attempted to speak of

⁷⁸³ “*On but donc sur le sacrement, comme on bute sur le corps, comme on bute sur l’institution, comme on bute sur la letter des Écritures...*” [Chauvet, *Symbole et Sacrement*, 161] Quotation cited in Miller’s “An Abyss at the Heart of Mediation: Louis-Marie Chauvet’s Fundamental Theology of Sacramentality,” 236.

⁷⁸⁴ Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, 155.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 383.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 405.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 533.

Christic presence in a manner that communicates both the Otherness of mystery and our participation in such mystery. This theology has made good use of the insights of Casel, Bouyer and Schillebeeckx by understanding the Eucharist as action and that the Christ's presence must be understood as an active presence which is not static. Likewise, Chauvet's emphasis on language as the mediator of the Word finds much support in Bouyer's theology of the Eucharist. Therefore, while these post-conciliar theologians utilise the insights of post-modern philosophy, their reflections remain firmly grounded in a rich appreciation of mystery that was revitalised by theologians such as Casel, Bouyer and Schillebeeckx.

From engagement with Chauvet, it is clear that there are aspects of his theology that require further discussion. While his account of the Paschal Mystery embraces everything from the incarnation to the Parousia, he fails to allow the resurrection of Christ to truly shape his reflections on the sacraments. For instance, in his theology he fails to fully develop the argument that the risen Christ is *personally* present and active in the Eucharist. Gerald O'Collins reaffirms this criticism, stating that he "searched in vain for Chauvet's developing such themes as the crucified and risen Christ being personally present and active in the celebration of the sacraments."⁷⁸⁸ Still, Chauvet's sacramentology presents a rich and dynamic understanding of presence by being receptive to the abyss of absence which saturates one's encounter with the risen Christ in the Eucharist. Hence, it can be claimed that Chauvet's sacramentology has made a significant contribution to theologian's understanding of Christ's presence in the Eucharist.

It is clear from the above that there are points of convergence between Marion and Chauvet, and yet, at the same time, it must be acknowledged that Marion's presentation of Christ's presence is not receptive to absence. Also, Marion gives the majority of his attention to Christ's real presence in the Eucharist species, to the impoverishment of the Eucharist in its

⁷⁸⁸ O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 155.

other vital dimensions. Also, Marion fails to recognise that there are other ways to approach Christic presence other than the notion of transubstantiation. Therefore, while Marion presents an interesting theology of the Eucharist by utilising the insights of post-modern philosophy, he fails to be fully engaged with Christ's resurrection. As a result, he does not give a satisfactory account of our dynamic encounters with the risen Christ in the Eucharist. This does not imply that his work is to be dismissed. Rather, the insights of Marion's reflection on the Eucharist are revitalised when considered alongside Chauvet's dynamic theology of absence.

At this point, of particular interest is the theology of Herbert McCabe, who presents a persuasive theology by successfully treating the Eucharist in a manner that remains respectful of the Thomistic tradition. At the same time, McCabe's treatment suggests an innovative understanding of real presence based on the insights raised by modern experiences of language and culture.

4.6. Herbert McCabe

4.6.1. The Eucharist as the Creative Language of God and the Gift

The central question for Herbert McCabe is one that is of primary concern for many contemporary theologians of the Eucharist: can we have a theology of the Eucharist that is rooted in the concept of *meaning* rather than *being*?⁷⁸⁹ While engaging with this question, McCabe speaks of the Eucharist as the creative language of God and the gift. In his article *The Eucharist as Language*,⁷⁹⁰ McCabe presents an exemplar of his theological reflection on this important question and in what follows, this article in particular serves as a compass, helping us navigate through his reflections and coherently present the way in which McCabe develops his theology of the Eucharist.

⁷⁸⁹ Herbert McCabe, *God Matters* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987), 115.

⁷⁹⁰ Herbert McCabe, "The Eucharist as Language." *Modern Theology* 15, no. 2 (1999): 131-41.

However, before engaging with McCabe's theology it is important to make clear that his reflection on the Eucharist is far more metaphysical than either the work of Marion or Chauvet. Whilst McCabe's approach is different to these theologians, he has also been influenced by Heidegger, and like Marion, responds to Derrida's claim concerning the impossibility of gift. McCabe's metaphysical orientation emerges in his work as he is operating within the theological framework of Thomist philosophy. Hence, it is important to observe McCabe's consideration of the doctrine of transubstantiation,⁷⁹¹ of which he says Aquinas is its most coherent exponent. It will be seen from the following that the doctrine of transubstantiation as it is integral to McCabe's understanding of the Eucharist.

4.6.2. *The Meaning of Change*

McCabe highlights that, when considering the Eucharist, many theologians propose that some manner of change occurs to the bread and wine and to the people participating in the celebration. However, he is quick to discern the inaccuracy of their claim that this change is *substantial*. McCabe suggests that, in Aristotelian terms, a substantial change is what occurs when, for example, an animal dies and its carcass rots, or when we eat some food and our body metabolizes it. He emphasises that transubstantiation itself is not an Aristotelian account and makes clear that the philosophy of Aristotle could not come to terms with Christian assertions such as 'God created the World' or with the Eucharistic affirmation that

⁷⁹¹ It is significant to highlight McCabe's condemnation of a theology of transignification. For him, efforts to substitute transubstantiation with a doctrine of transignification, according to which it was not the *being* of the bread and wine which became the *being* of Christ, but instead the *meaning* that the bread and wine had as a symbol of our unity in common meal, became through our faith a sign of deeper unity in the body of Christ, sounded suspiciously similar to the proposition that a "piece of fabric with the necessary number of stars and stripes on it should be the national flag and, on ceremonial occasions be saluted as an expression of patriotism." This says McCabe "makes the flag an emblem whose meaning is supplied by opinions and aspirations and bonds of friendship in the human society in question." However, he claims that to understand the Eucharist in this way is to empty it of its deeper meaning. Yet, there is much insight to be gained from this doctrine as will be seen in his rewriting of the doctrine of transubstantiation. See especially, McCabe, "The Eucharist as Language," 132; *God Matters*, 146-54.

‘this bread is Christ’s body.’⁷⁹² Hence, McCabe claims that for theologians to speak of the Eucharist in this manner makes little sense. He argues that, for Aquinas, what happens in the Eucharist technically is not a change at all, or at least not any more than creation is a change.⁷⁹³

According to McCabe, the proposition that God has *made* the world, a special kind of *making* that Christians refer to as creation, presents an “Aristotelianly impossible kind of making.”⁷⁹⁴ Likewise, McCabe claims that transubstantiation names an “Aristotelianly impossible kind of change”⁷⁹⁵ and highlights that, for many thinkers, transubstantiation is a term which refers to a form of concealed or camouflaged substantial change. It suggests that what was previously bread has come to be, “through a miraculous sleight-of-hand on God’s part, a bloody hunk of human flesh that must be concealed under veils of bread and wine in order to overcome our human revulsion at the thought of eating and drinking such substances.”⁷⁹⁶ McCabe concludes that, while transubstantiation may be correct given Aquinas’ understanding of it, the doctrine of transubstantiation must be recognised as being misleading.

For McCabe, it must be acknowledged that what does *not* occur in the Eucharist is some sort of quasi-chemical change within bread. Instead, God totally transforms the *meaning of change* itself.⁷⁹⁷ McCabe claims that God causes not merely a change “in what it is that exists,”⁷⁹⁸ but a transformation of what it *means* to exist. Thus in the Eucharist, McCabe asserts, that there is a *becoming* that is more fundamental than substantial change, that is, in

⁷⁹² On this point it is important to make clear that it must be recognised that Aristotle had a metaphysics of *substance* and *form*, whereas, Aquinas developed a deeper metaphysics of *esse*, and *creation*. See especially, McCabe, "The Eucharist as Language," 133.

⁷⁹³ Here, McCabe quotes Aquinas’ statement that transubstantiation is not a change: “[*Haec conversio*] [*n*]ec *continetur inter species motus naturalis*” (*Summa Theologiae*, IIIa.75.4, c). See also; *God Matters*, 147.

⁷⁹⁴ McCabe, *God Matters*, 147.

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁶ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 122.

⁷⁹⁷ McCabe, *God Matters*, 150.

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

the way that Aristotle understood it.⁷⁹⁹ Put in Aquinas's terminology [not in Aristotle's]: "the *esse* of this piece of bread and this cup of wine have come to be the *esse* of Christ."⁸⁰⁰ McCabe states that, "[T]his transformation of a substance [bread] into another particular existent [Christ], as distinct from a different kind of thing [as in ordinary substantial change] would have been completely unintelligible to Aristotle as, of course, was...the whole notion of *esse* in Aquinas's sense."⁸⁰¹ Hence, it must be understood that it was precisely in this way that Aquinas utilised the notion of *esse* to present realities such as God's act of creation and Christ's presence in the Eucharist. After making this qualification between Aquinas' and Aristotle's notion of *esse*, McCabe's next theological objective provides an explanation of *meaning*.

McCabe argues that "meaning is never subjective 'just in the mind' but nor is it 'objective' in the sense that most people would reckon that leopards and trees are objectively there (or not)."⁸⁰² For McCabe, words are for communication; they are for common use. Therefore, words are unable to function unless there is a form of conventional agreement about that which they imply. For McCabe "meaning *belongs to the language* itself."⁸⁰³ He emphasises that there is no such thing as a private meaning and highlights that Ludwig Wittgenstein has convincingly made this point in his philosophy.⁸⁰⁴ However, McCabe does acknowledge that in "the development of language throughout a human history, there is the creation and appreciation of new meanings, which is the intellectual life of a human society and is the

⁷⁹⁹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 123.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁰¹ McCabe, "The Eucharist as Language," 133.

⁸⁰² Ibid.

⁸⁰³ Ibid., 134.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.

intellectual life of particular individuals who share in the task.”⁸⁰⁵ In fact, Aquinas also made this point in the *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*.⁸⁰⁶

McCabe states that Aquinas proposes that “the understanding of meaning is the work of human intelligence, by which we transcend our individuality: but this intelligence is nevertheless itself a power of the human soul which is always the substantial form of an individual human body.”⁸⁰⁷ He goes on to highlight Aquinas’ distinction between concepts and sensations and suggests that, from Aquinas’ point of view, unlike sensations, notions are not the private possessions of individuals, but they do still arise from individual material animals transcending their individuality, and therefore, their materiality.⁸⁰⁸ McCabe writes that Aquinas was aware [as was Aristotle], that unlike sensations, thoughts have no corporeal organ:

[B]rains do not think; they are the co-ordinating centre of the structure of the nervous system which makes possible the sensual interpretation of our world, which is itself interpreted in the structure of symbols, language, which we do not inherit with out genes but create for ourselves in communities.⁸⁰⁹

From this standpoint McCabe argues that there is a form of objectivity to meaning together with a symbiotic relationship between language and society. This point is integral to his understanding of the Eucharist as the creative language of God and the gift. He claims that the sacramental life of the Church, which centres on the Eucharist, “makes the a particular

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid. McCabe highlights that this point has been uncovered and outlined persuasively by Peter Geach in his criticism of the type of behaviourism he detected in Gilbert Ryle’s *Concept of Mind*. See especially, Peter Geach, *Mental Acts: Their Content and Their Objects*, ed. R. F. Holland, Studies in Philosophical Psychology (London Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1957); Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Chicago: University Of Chicago, 2000).

⁸⁰⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *On the Unity of the Intellect against the Averroists: (De Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroistas)*, trans. Beatrice H. Zedler (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press 1968).

⁸⁰⁷ McCabe, "The Eucharist as Language," 134. See also; *God Matters*, 119-21.

⁸⁰⁸ McCabe, "The Eucharist as Language," 134.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

society possible, and that it is this society [Church] that makes sacramental language meaningful, and what makes *this* language distinct from others is that the society in question is the mystery of the People of God.”⁸¹⁰

4.6.3. *The Resurrection and Language: A Rewriting of Transubstantiation*

McCabe highlights that the language of – substance, accident, substantial and accidental change, *esse*, transubstantiation, is very difficult for people to understand today. Such terms could even be described as misleading. In light of this, McCabe suggests a rewriting of the theory of transubstantiation. He proposes that we should speak of a *change of language*, where language is apprehended as an “objective, embodied, socially mediated reality”⁸¹¹ that established this world. In this context, language is not considered to be *given by* the community; rather it is *given to* the community.⁸¹² He states that “sacramental language is the language *granted to us*... [in which mystery] is to be expressed and lived out in human and material terms.”⁸¹³ Mitchell states, “the Eucharistic *gift* is thus understood as the *gift* of a new language, a new society and a new body: the body of Christ.”⁸¹⁴ Here, it is important that attention is drawn to the emphasis placed by McCabe on the importance of stripping language down to its dictionary meaning.

For McCabe, it is only when language is distilled to its dictionary meaning that one can affirm with confidence that all human languages are intertranslatable.⁸¹⁵ He suggests that “when we learn ‘our own’ language we are not simply fitting into the customs of our tribe, but potentially hearing and speaking to the whole human race, past, present and to come.”⁸¹⁶

For McCabe, the Christian mystery has been revealed definitively in Christ, the Word made

⁸¹⁰ McCabe, "The Eucharist as Language," 134.

⁸¹¹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 123.

⁸¹² Ibid.

⁸¹³ McCabe, "The Eucharist as Language," 134.

⁸¹⁴ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 123.

⁸¹⁵ McCabe, "The Eucharist as Language," 138.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid.

Flesh. Hence, he claims that it is the body of the risen Christ that is present in the Eucharistic celebration in the mode of language, in the signs one utilises because it is through language that the risen Christ is encountered and communicates to the whole human race. For McCabe, our language has become His body, it is His [Christ] language that has become our body.⁸¹⁷ Loughlin highlights that language “allows us to realize a social, communicated world as our habitat.”⁸¹⁸ McCabe makes this point when speaking of the way in which bodiliness extends into language:

[T]he human body extends itself into language, into social structures, into all the various and complex means of living together, communicating together ... but all of them are rooted in the body; there is no human communication which is not fundamentally bodily communication.⁸¹⁹

McCabe maintains that language, albeit in rather slow manner, is always changing. However, there are certain times where language changes radically and rapidly. For instance, if one considers revolutions, such as the social upheaval that occurred February 1917 in Russia, one can see that radical and sudden linguistic change can occur. Such an example presents a situation where pre-revolutionary language could no longer be used to express the world ‘after the revolution’. It is this manner of revolution that McCabe perceives as happening in the Eucharist, a revolution of *worlds* not merely *words*. Loughlin writes that for McCabe:

[A] new world is thus a new language, a new communication; and it is this – a new world, language and communication – that are given in the Eucharist. Christ comes to us as the *medium* of communication. He gives us nothing other than himself and his language: body and word.⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁷ Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 131.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid.

⁸¹⁹ McCabe, *God Matters*, 121.

⁸²⁰ Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 132.

McCabe states that all the above is possible only when one considers the central meaning of the Eucharist, the death and resurrection of Christ, whose death and resurrection of Christ must be understood as a revolution on the other side of Easter in which Christ has become “not less alive, or less bodily but more alive, more bodily, than ever before.”⁸²¹

McCabe claims that the Eucharist is a celebratory feast which centres on a defeat and death. He claims that this feast is both about “the world of sin and about the redemption of this world within, but from beyond, this world by grace.”⁸²² Hence, for McCabe, if either of these aspects is underappreciated or forgotten, one’s understanding of the Eucharist is impoverished. McCabe argues that the Eucharist is an *agape*, a love feast, “but it is saying that love is best represented in our kind of world by an acceptance of death.”⁸²³ The Eucharistic celebration is not revealed to us in philosophical or sociological reflection, nor is it presented as a doctrine. Rather, the “celebrating liberation from slavery takes place under the shadow of the imminence of Calvary, and these irreconcilables like presence/absence cannot coexist on paper but only in person, in the human person of Christ.”⁸²⁴ That is, “[N]ot in what he illustrates or what *he stands for* but in *himself*.”⁸²⁵ It is from this standpoint that McCabe affirms that transubstantiation is correct. For him, it is in light of Christ’s resurrection that one must come to speak of a revolutionary change in the Eucharist, as “[T]he body of the risen Christ that comes to us in the Eucharist from our promised future; it is post-revolutionary, *more* bodily [not less so].”⁸²⁶

⁸²¹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 124.

⁸²² McCabe, “The Eucharist as Language,” 139.

⁸²³ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁶ Loughlin, “Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift,” 132. Here, it is important to recall Louis-Marie Chauvet’s concept I-body which finds its genesis in Pauline theology, this is, that the body and spirit are not separate or mutually exclusive categories as the Greeks would have us believe. Instead, we *are* body and spirit, thus, the more I become spirit the more I become – that is, actualize – my body, and the more I become body, the more I become – that is, actualize – my spirit. See especially, Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A*

McCabe suggests that we may speak of bread and wine being subjected to a revolutionary change in the Eucharistic celebration only in light of the Paschal Mystery, that is, the death and resurrection of Christ. His understanding of revolutionary change is crucial to his rewriting of transubstantiation. This becomes clear when one observes that transubstantiation is *not* an apprehension which suggests that the bread and wine become something else, which is the misunderstanding that many Catholics had of the doctrine. Rather, for McCabe, transubstantiation is a revolutionary change in which the bread and wine *do not become something else* but instead *become more radically* food and drink. He states that, "Christ has a better right to appear as food and drink than bread and wine have."⁸²⁷ Here, Loughlin provides a perceptive summary of McCabe's rewriting of transubstantiation. He highlights that McCabe argues that other than the sexual union, "there is no more primitive and fundamental form of bodily communication than the sharing of food."⁸²⁸ For McCabe, the everyday meal is a symbol of unity as it is rooted in our bodily existence. Food then, is a "language in which we communicate and come together."⁸²⁹

McCabe maintains that "Christ is the true bread because in Him we come truly together; He is more truly food than food itself."⁸³⁰ Thus, when people come together to celebrate the Eucharist, they gather for a communal meal which is simultaneously the language of their bodily communication. Yet, this language-meal is not their own, "but comes to them from beyond the site of their gathering, from beyond and after the revolution."⁸³¹ It is a language which we can barely speak, and yet it is the language in which we can most "truly

Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence, 149-50. This is also similar to Rahner's conception of body, see; Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations II* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), 240-41.

⁸²⁷ McCabe, *God Matters*, 127.

⁸²⁸ Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 132.

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*, 133.

communicate, be most bodily, most alive.”⁸³² Hence, McCabe presents the Eucharistic change as a change of language, stating that in the Eucharist, “the language itself is transformed and becomes the medium of the future; the language itself becomes presence, the bodily presence of Christ.”⁸³³ For McCabe, this account is transubstantial because “while the ‘accidents’ of pre-revolutionary language remain, its ‘substance’ is post-revolutionary.”⁸³⁴ Briefly stated, the signs are the same but their “signifieds have changed; they are barely comprehensible.”⁸³⁵

McCabe suggests that this revolution in language which occurs in transubstantiation is a real and objective revolution. Mitchell states that, for McCabe, “when Christ revolutionised language by calling bread His body and wine His blood, both speech and the nature of change were themselves changed.”⁸³⁶ In McCabe’s opinion, “Christ has a better right to appear as food and drink than bread and wine have.”⁸³⁷ From this standpoint, McCabe argues that the most applicable parallel to transubstantiation can be discovered in the doctrine of creation, rather than in speculative philosophical discourse on substantial change. He proposes that, in the process of creation, this thing does not change into that thing. Instead, in creation what was not *comes to be*, “a revolution happens on the level of being.”⁸³⁸

According to McCabe, this is the kind of revolution which occurs in transubstantiation. He claims that Christ’s bodily presence subverts and displaces our language, and it is precisely because of this that he proposes “the language which is Christ’s bodily presence in consecrated bread and wine has more right to be called both word and body than our own

⁸³² Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 133.

⁸³³ McCabe, *God Matters*, 128.

⁸³⁴ Loughlin, "Transubstantiation: Eucharist as Pure Gift," 133.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁶ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 126. See also, John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1997), 124-34. Here, Macquarrie provides some useful and concise insight concerning the Reformers different understandings of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist.

⁸³⁷ McCabe, *God Matters*, 127.

⁸³⁸ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 126.

speech and bodies do.”⁸³⁹ McCabe suggests that this *res* is a *sacramentum* of a deeper *res*. He states that this *res tantum* is “the *agape*, the *caritas*, the love which is the Godhead. For McCabe, the liturgy of the Eucharist and its attendant sacraments, including our life in the Church, is itself a sacramental sign and realisation of our life in the Kingdom.”⁸⁴⁰

4.7. Conclusion

In light of the above, it is clear that McCabe presents a persuasive theology of the Eucharist. His rewriting of transubstantiation presents a strong refutation of Derrida’s challenge in relation to the possibility of gift. Furthermore, his theological reflection presents a rich alternative to that of Marion and Chauvet by remaining true to the Thomistic tradition, whilst simultaneously providing fresh insights from his engagement with modern experiences of language and culture. However, it must be recognised that both Marion and McCabe give all their attention to Christ’s real presence in the sacred species. While McCabe does engage with the resurrection, he fails to allow his engagement with Christ’s resurrection to truly shape his theology in the fullest sense. However, McCabe is more receptive of the Paschal Mystery in his theology than Marion, who appears to pass over the resurrection in total silence.

Additionally, as a result of Marion’s and McCabe’s focus on presence, they each neglect the significance of absence when attempting to understand one’s encounters with the risen Christ in the Eucharist. Hence, when Chauvet’s receptivity to absence is considered alongside McCabe’s theology, both become revitalised. From one’s reading of McCabe’s theology of the Eucharist, it appears that both Marion’s and Chauvet’s total dismissal of the notion of causation should not be accepted as fast as many post-conciliar theologians would suggest. McCabe has clearly demonstrated that by expanding one’s understanding of

⁸³⁹ Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 126.

⁸⁴⁰ McCabe, "The Eucharist as Language," 141.

transubstantiation, one can still utilise the insights of postmodern philosophy, with its rich contribution to understandings of language within the context to presence, while at the same time working within a more traditional understanding of Christic presence. However, each of these post-conciliar writers, Marion, Chauvet and McCabe has falling short in their engagement with Jesus' resurrection.

In what follows, it will be argued that the dynamics of presence and absence in one's encounter with the risen Christ can be more fully appreciated and present themselves in a richer manner when one considers the symbolic language used in the resurrection narratives. In the resurrection narratives, specific situations and contexts emerge that enrich theologies of the Eucharist concerning the various modes of the risen Christ's presence and the way in which humankind encounters Him now in His state of resurrection. Therefore, it is important that we turn our attention to the insights raised by biblical theologians concerning the disciples' encounters with the risen Christ after His death.

Chapter Five

Reading the Narratives of the Resurrection Appearances

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter will be bring to the fore the insights of contemporary biblical theologians, namely, N.T. Wright, Luke Timothy Johnson and Sandra Schneiders, concerning the resurrection of Jesus. It highlights the way in which Jesus' followers encountered the risen Christ after His death. However, this chapter will not focus primarily on the historicity of the resurrection. Rather, it will engage with the manner in which the disciples encounter the risen Christ in a new and unique way. Particular attention will be given to the contexts and situations described in the Gospels' appearance accounts. Here, it will be argued that such contexts and situations provide significant insight into humankind's understanding of the Eucharistic celebration, especially the unique mode of existence distinctive to the risen Christ after His death. The chapter will open with an analysis of N.T. Wright's approach to the resurrection.

5.2. N.T. Wright's Approach to the Resurrection

5.2.1. *Easter and History: The Resurrection as Revelatory-Event*

When treating the Easter events in his *The Resurrection of the Son of God*,⁸⁴¹ N.T. Wright claims that two things *must* be considered as historically secure: "the emptiness of the tomb and the meetings with Jesus."⁸⁴² For Wright, when one situates the early Christian

⁸⁴¹ N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 4 vols., vol. 3, Christian Origins and the Question of God (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003).

⁸⁴² *Ibid.*, 686. It is interesting to highlight Wright's acknowledgement of the approach taken by John Dominic Crossan to the Easter narratives, particularly in relation to Luke's accounts. Wright draws attention to the fact that writers such as Crossan have made the argument that the resurrection stories have nothing to do with things that actually took place in the real world of space and time and everything to do with what goes on in an

community within the world of second-Temple Judaism and considers what the early community believed about Jesus' resurrection and their own future hope, these two phenomena present themselves as being firmly historical.⁸⁴³ He reaches this conclusion from his analysis of the mutations of resurrection belief in the Jewish tradition, and finds that it becomes increasingly less tangible to suggest that the early Christians belief in Christ's resurrection could have generated spontaneously from within its Jewish context.⁸⁴⁴ He further emphasises this point by pointing out that when the early Christians themselves were asked about their Easter faith, their answers accentuated "stories of Jesus' tomb being empty, and stories about Him appearing to people, alive again."⁸⁴⁵

Wright makes clear that the stories of the empty tomb and the appearances would not independently suffice by themselves to support the generation of early Christians' Easter faith.⁸⁴⁶ He argues that it is only when they are considered together that they present "a powerful reason"⁸⁴⁷ for the emergence of belief in the resurrection. Wright draws attention to

invisible reality in which on the one hand, Jesus is 'alive' in some sense which did not involve an empty tomb, and that on the other hand, the hearts and minds of believers are strengthened by their experience of Him. Briefly stated, for Crossan, stories of the empty tomb and of the appearances are perfectly valid parables expressing [Christian] faith, akin in their own way to the Good Samaritan story. However, Wright does not necessarily disagree with Crossan, but he insists that to read Luke in this way would have been strongly contested by the evangelist himself. See especially, John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 197; Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 656. See also; John Dominic Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 216. For an excellent dialogue between Wright and Crossan see N.T. Wright and John Dominic Crossan, "The Resurrection: Historical Event or Theological Explanation? A Dialogue," in *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*, ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 16-47. For an excellent presentation of Crossan's interpretation of the resurrection see, Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (England: Apollos Intervarsity Press, 2010), 519-57. Additionally, another particularly useful overview and comparison of the hermeneutics utilised by Wright and Crossan can be found in Robert B. Stewart, "The Hermeneutics of Resurrection, How N. T. Wright and John Dominic Crossan Read the Resurrection Narratives," in *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*, ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 58-77.

⁸⁴³ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 686.

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3-552.

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 686.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 686-96. See also; N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 58.

⁸⁴⁷ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 686.

the fact that other explanations have been offered concerning the resurrection of Christ,⁸⁴⁸ but concludes that none of them offer the same explanatory power as does the strong evidence suggesting that the early Christians belief in Jesus' resurrection emerged from a knowledge that the tomb was *in fact* empty and that Jesus *had been* discovered to be "thoroughly alive again."⁸⁴⁹ Wright's emphasis on the historicity of the empty tomb and the resurrection appearances is significant for theological reflection on the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Eucharistic celebration.

Understanding the Easter phenomena as historical occurrences enables contemporary theologians to consider them as revelatory-events. This revelatory aspect of the Easter appearances is clear when one observes the transformed manner in which Jesus' followers understood and spoke about who He was, and what happened to Him, their encounters with the *risen* Jesus. Wright insists that it was only after their encounters with the risen Christ that the early Christians began to refer to Him as *Kyrios* or *Christos*.⁸⁵⁰ For instance, Paul writes that now "[E]very tongue shall confess that Jesus, the Messiah, is Lord" (Ph 2:11). According to Wright, such claims can only be explained by the fact that through Jesus' resurrection it was now revealed to His followers that "God had made this Jesus both Lord and Messiah."⁸⁵¹

⁸⁴⁸ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 686-87. See also; O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 72-75; 80-92. Here O'Collins, like Wright, refutes that Christians belief in the resurrection could have emerged from the mutations of resurrection belief in Judaism. Furthermore, he draws attention to two theories that have been proposed by writers such as Philip Pullman and H.E.G. Paulus. O'Collins appropriately titled this section of his book *Beyond the Fringe*. He highlights that Pullman claims to have 'eliminated' the Easter appearances of Jesus by introducing a twin brother ["Christ"], who pretended to be Jesus raised from the dead. Hence, he proposes that Mary Magdalene and other disciples were tricked into believing in Jesus' resurrection. However, such a proposition presents itself as O'Collins kindly puts it "on the fringe." Furthermore, he draws attention to Paulus' swoon theory in which it is proposed that Jesus was revived from the dead. However, this theory presents itself to be "on the fringe" like Pullmans proposition. See, Philip Pullman, *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd, 2010); H. E. G. Paulus, *Das Leben Jesu, Als Grundlage Einer Reinen Geschichte Des Urchristentums*, 2 vols. (Heidelberg: Winter, 1828).

⁸⁴⁹ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 686-87.

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 553. See also, Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*, 63-73.

⁸⁵¹ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 533.

This new-found recognition of Jesus as *Kyrios* is evident through the appearance narratives (Lk 24:33, Mk 16:19-20, Jn 21, Acts 9:26). Gerald O'Collins, however, draws attention to an important dimension concerning the context of these revelatory-events which enriches theological reflection on one's encounters with the transfigured Christ in the Eucharist.

O'Collins observes that there is notable *ordinariness* to Easter appearances.⁸⁵² He states that "unlike other communications from God, the appearances do not take place in ecstasy (as happens, for example, in Acts 10:9-16; 2 Cor 12:2-4), nor in a dream (as happens, for example, in Mt 1:20; 2:12-13, 19-20, 22), nor – with the seeming exception of John 20:19-23 – by night (as happens, for example, in Acts 16:9; 18:9-11; 23:11; 27:23-24)."⁸⁵³ Rather, as recounted by St Paul and narrated by the Four Gospels, the risen Jesus appears in everyday circumstances, in the ordinary, without any characteristics of future glory.⁸⁵⁴ However, while there is an ordinary dimension to the Easter appearances, the New Testament attributes a transformed life to the risen Jesus.⁸⁵⁵ The disciples' encounters with the risen Christ did not take place in some other-worldly context. While they encountered Christ in this world, He is transformed and present to them in an entirely new mode in faith.⁸⁵⁶ Hence, the Easter appearances can be understood as encounters with the extraordinary in the ordinary.

⁸⁵² O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 62.

⁸⁵³ Ibid. However, there is one exception in Acts where St Paul's experience on the Damascus road is described: St Paul faces "a light from heaven, brighter than the sun (Acts 26:13)." See also, Acts 9:3, 22:6, 9. However, it is important to highlight that there is no reference to such luminous phenomenon when St Paul himself speaks of his encounter with the risen Christ (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8; Gal 1:12, 16). O'Collins suggest that perhaps St Paul is alluding to his experience outside Damascus when he refers to "the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6)." However, it is significant to remain aware of St Paul's emphasis on the shining in human hearts, not the outward, but "the inward phenomenon", or luminous phenomenon of the Damascus road experience which is narrated in Acts three times. See, M. J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 33-37.

⁸⁵⁴ O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 62.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid., 64.

⁸⁵⁶ See especially, Raymond E. Brown, "The Resurrection of Jesus," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990), 1373-77. Here, it is important to make clear that the my decision to refrain from given a detailed treatment of Raymond Browns approach to the resurrection in this chapter emerged from my study of the biblical scholars

It can be concluded, therefore, that, understanding the Easter appearances as events that occurred in history, namely, as events where Jesus reveals Himself and is encountered by people after His death in an entirely new way in this world,⁸⁵⁷ enables us to see the Easter narratives as a well-spring for the enrichment of theological reflection on humankind's encounters with the risen Christ present in the Eucharistic celebration. Furthermore, the dynamism of the transformed life of Jesus emerges even more prominently when we observe the symbolic dimension of the disciples' encounters with the risen Christ and the intimate connection between their experiences and our redemption.

5.2.2. *The Resurrection Narratives: Redemption and Transformation*

According to Wright, the discovery of the empty tomb should not be considered only as an event that contributes to our Easter faith as to do so would be to ignore the profound symbolic meaning that the Easter events had for early Christians.⁸⁵⁸ O'Collins also makes this point, claiming that "in the New Testament the empty tomb signified a return from the dead and all that such a return implied."⁸⁵⁹ O'Collins states that the empty tomb communicated symbolically that Christ's resurrection is a "victory over death" (1 Cor 15:54-57),⁸⁶⁰ "the empty tomb of Jesus symbolised...the complete life that has overcome the silence of death."⁸⁶¹ Here, the intimate relationship between Jesus' resurrection and redemption becomes clear. O'Collins suggests that the symbolic dimension of the empty tomb expresses that "the redemption is much more than a mere escape from our world of suffering and death...it means the transformation of this material, bodily world with its whole history of sin

being engaged with here. Each of these writers makes clear throughout their analysis of Jesus' resurrection that they are very much aware of Brown's insights. In fact, it is clear that they are using them in their treatises, but they develop them further and bring new insights to bear on the Easter events.

⁸⁵⁷ See especially, Alan F. Segal, "The Resurrection: Faith or History?," in *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*, ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 121-38.

⁸⁵⁸ Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*, 147-64.

⁸⁵⁹ O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 94.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid.

and suffering.”⁸⁶² Wright further suggests that this point is justified when one considers that, while the early Christians spoke of Jesus’ rising from the dead using Jewish resurrection language, such language was revolutionised following the appearances of the risen Christ.⁸⁶³

Wright states that unlike Jewish resurrection language, in the appearance narratives the evangelists speak of Jesus’ resurrection and redemption not only as continuity, but also as transformation,⁸⁶⁴ i.e. continuity in the sense that the one who they called Jesus, who had been crucified, was the one who had been raised from the dead. The language of the appearance narratives is transformative, in the sense that when speaking of Him in His state of resurrection, they provide a “strange portrait”⁸⁶⁵ of a Jesus, who is definitely embodied but “whose body has unprecedented, hitherto unimagined, properties.”⁸⁶⁶ For example, the evangelists proclaim that the risen Jesus physically eats and drinks (Lk 24:36, Jn 21:13-16), but He also appears in a room with locked doors and disappears as He wishes (Lk 24:31, Mt 28:9, Jn 20:19-21). Therefore, although embodied, the risen Christ is not bound by the physical laws of our world.

According to Wright, such a portrait of the risen Christ could only have emerged from people having *really* encountered the risen Christ in this mode of embodiment after His death.⁸⁶⁷

Wright emphasises that the resurrection of Jesus must be considered as a bodily resurrection but of a different kind: it is bodily in the sense that it is matter transformed.⁸⁶⁸ This

⁸⁶² O’Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 95.

⁸⁶³ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 685-96. See also, Markus Vinzent, *Christ’s Resurrection in Early Christianity and the Making of the New Testament* (England: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 27-30.

⁸⁶⁴ Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*, 147-63.

⁸⁶⁵ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 696.

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid. See also, Raymond E. Brown, *The Virginal Conception & Bodily Resurrection of Jesus* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1974), 69-77.

⁸⁶⁷ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 696.

⁸⁶⁸ It is important to note that Sandra Schneiders states that understanding the Jesus’ resurrection as a *bodily* is the hermeneutical key to Johannine spirituality. She claims that we can only speak of the risen Jesus being *personally* present here and now in His resurrected state when it is accepted that the resurrection is understood

transformative dimension is integral to the way in which one speaks of Christ's presence in the Eucharistic celebration. Another significant point emerges from a close reading of the Easter narratives, that there is prevailing sense of the absence in relation to the risen Christ. This absence features prominently not only in the evangelists' accounts of the discovery of the empty tomb, but also in the narratives of Christ's Easter appearances.

5.2.3. The Unique Event: Burning Hearts and Broken Bread

Wright notes that both the discovery of the empty tomb and the appearances of risen Jesus present themselves as the necessary conditions for the rise of the Jesus' followers Easter faith.⁸⁶⁹ However, it emerges in the evangelist's accounts of the empty tomb that an emphatic absence is revealed. For example, in the accounts of the first Easter day, when the women discover the empty tomb, they are told that Jesus "...has risen, He is not here" (Mk 16:6, Lk 24:6). The tomb is empty because through His resurrection Jesus has been "...exalted to the right hand of God" (Acts 2:33). This absence of Jesus presents itself as an integral aspect of His resurrection. In fact, it can be understood as the necessary condition for the disciples' new and unique mode of encounter with the risen Christ. In His absence, the disciples encounter the risen Jesus through symbolic action.

Of particular significance here is Luke's narrative of the two disciples journeying to Emmaus and the account of the meal where they came to recognise the risen Christ emphatically present in their midst (Lk 24:13-35). Wright emphasises that the nuances of the meal at Emmaus must not be misconstrued.⁸⁷⁰ He highlights that in Luke's description Jesus performs four important actions that point directly to the Eucharistic action of the Church,

as a bodily resurrection. See especially, Sandra M. Schneiders, *Jesus Risen in Our Midst: Essays on the Resurrection of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2013), 3-33, 61-96.

⁸⁶⁹ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 706.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 660.

namely, Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it and gives it to the men (Lk 24:30-32).⁸⁷¹ Through these actions, the two disciples come to recognise the presence of the risen Christ. However, their recognition reaches its climax in Jesus' absence, when "He vanished from their sight" and they began to reflect on what had just happened (Lk 24:31). Therefore, it is in His absence that the risen Jesus is encountered in His glorified state through the symbolic actions of the Emmaus meal, an action which the Church re-actualises each Sunday in the Eucharistic celebration. In the absence of His human body, symbolic action acts as a point of encounter with the risen Jesus and the symbolic dimension becomes a door to the sacred through which the faithful enter into deep relationship with the transfigured Christ after His death.⁸⁷²

Following the meal, and after Christ had vanished from their sight, the disciples reflected on their experience of the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus: "[D]id not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us? (Lk 24:32)." On the road to Emmaus "...beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the scriptures (Lk 23:27)." Johnson claims that the first key term in this verse is *diermēneúō* which means to 'translate' (cf Acts 9:38) or to 'interpret' (cf 1 Cor 12:30; 14:5, 13, 27).⁸⁷³ Luke speaks of Jesus showing the disciples "how he 'brought to fulfilment' the meaning of Scripture (Lk 22:37: "that which is about me has a fulfilment").⁸⁷⁴ Luke depicts the risen Christ as "teaching the Church the proper way to read

⁸⁷¹ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 660. See also; N.T. Wright, *The Meal Jesus Gave Us: Understanding Holy Communion* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 55-58.

⁸⁷² For an excellent presentation of the Catholic sacraments as 'doors to the sacred,' see especially, Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to the Sacraments in the Catholic Church* (United States of America: Liguori, 2001). Here, Martos provides a rich sacramentology by utilising the insights of anthropologist, namely, Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner. Also, John Macquarrie makes significant reference to this book in Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, 5-8.

⁸⁷³ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, 18 vols., vol. 3, *Sacra Pagina* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 396.

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

the texts of Torah, that is, messianically.”⁸⁷⁵ The second key term in this verse, according to Johnson, is the word *dianoigō* meaning ‘to open’. The evangelist’s use of the term *dianoigō* is important as he also uses it in reference to the ‘opening of the eyes’ in Luke 24:31.⁸⁷⁶ Here, Luke implies that in Christ’s absence we encounter the risen Christ in the scriptures. In listening to and reading the scriptures Christ becomes emphatically present to us. In the Eucharistic action of the Church the actions described by Luke – the breaking of the bread, the proclamation of the scriptures – come together in one unified symbolic action in which one experiences the presence of the risen Christ in His absence.⁸⁷⁷ This manner of experience is not only of central importance within the resurrection narratives, but also to our worshipping life as Christians. Attention will now be given to Luke Timothy Johnson’s engagement with the resurrection narratives where he gives significant consideration to the rich dimension of religious experience which permeates the New Testament, and in particular the Easter narratives.

5.3. Luke Timothy Johnson and the Post-Resurrection Experiences

5.3.1. The Appearance Narratives as Accounts of Continuing Religious Experiences

In *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*,⁸⁷⁸ Luke Timothy Johnson states that the way in which one interprets the post-resurrection appearances of Christ is shaped by and dependent upon the manner in which one interprets the New Testament. He suggests that this is primarily on account of the limited amount of materials that are available to biblical scholars concerning the resurrection. St Ignatius of Antioch eloquently expresses in more apophatic manner the problem facing biblical scholars concerning the resurrection. He states

⁸⁷⁵ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 396.

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 396-7.

⁸⁷⁷ See especially, Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 27-63.

⁸⁷⁸ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 3 ed. (London: SCM Press, 2010).

that “Christ rose in the silence of God.”⁸⁷⁹ However, the material which is available to scholars when reading the appearance accounts of the resurrection is a series of statements or claims which clearly illustrate that some powerful, transformative experience generated the early Church and its Easter Faith.⁸⁸⁰

Similar to Wright, Johnson suggests that while Jesus’ resurrection presents itself as the generating factor of the Christian movement, the profound claim that Christ had rising from the dead only came to be proclaimed by the disciples after their new and unique encounters with the risen Jesus.⁸⁸¹ It can be said, therefore, that what the evangelists are describing in the appearance narratives is the way in which the disciples encounter the totally Other in the risen Christ. For Johnson, the appearance accounts describe encounters of the most elementary kind – religious experiences.

For him, the New Testament compositions possess four distinct dimensions: anthropological, historical, literary and religious.⁸⁸² These aspects of scripture are distinct yet inseparable. Johnson suggests that it is only possible to uncover a richer sense of the events described by the evangelists in the appearance narratives by utilising each of these dimensions. Yet, he claims that ‘religious’ is not the same as ‘theological’. Therefore, if one is to understand fully what it is that Johnson claims to be of primary significance in relation to the appearance narratives, it is important that to address his interpretation of ‘religious’ and ‘theological’ as these terms is integral to his apprehension of religious experience.

Johnson argues that theology is a disciplined reflection on religious discourse and practice. Understanding theology in this way, he insists that the New Testament need not be perceived

⁸⁷⁹ Justin J. Kelly, "Faith and Experience," *The Way* 17, no. 2 (1977): 141.

⁸⁸⁰ Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 95.

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁸⁸² Luke Timothy Johnson, *The New Testament: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1-7.

as a collection of theological writings in an abstract or theoretical mode. Rather, he claims that if one understands them as being written in this mode, then one has completely misinterpreted the Scriptures. However, it must be acknowledged that this perspective does not imply that the New Testament contains no theology: it does contain theology, but not one which resembles theological reflection as in the neo-scholastic mode. Rather, it is more appropriately described as a theology which pursues reflection on a “present and continuing experience of the most fundamental sort, i.e. religious experience.”⁸⁸³ For this reason, Johnson insists that the Christian conviction concerning the resurrection should not be equated with the narratives of that event.⁸⁸⁴ More appropriately, he claims that this conviction emerges from the experiences of those who encountered the risen Jesus and from the communities that continue to encounter Him in His glorified state. However, discerning religious experiences is not without its difficulties.

Johnson claims that no single kind of event can automatically be specified as religious. Therefore, he states that when one is engaging with religious experience, issues emerge concerning whether it can be distinguished from other experiences. From this standpoint, Johnson suggests that religious experience must be situated in the continuum of life experience in its totality, as the religious dimension of experience responds to, and emerges from, other facets of life.⁸⁸⁵ For Johnson, the religious aspect of life is as “pervasive as the economic and is equally co-mingled with psychological, sociological and cultural realities.”⁸⁸⁶ He highlights that when religious experience is understood in this way, it becomes apparent that the term *religious experience* can be easily misunderstood or distorted. He claims that part of the problem of defining religious experience is conceptual, because according to Johnson, experience is eternally subjective.

⁸⁸³ Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 95.

⁸⁸⁴ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 3, 389.

⁸⁸⁵ Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 96.

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid.

It must also be pointed out that there is also a significantly objective character to experience. For example, when one listens to a report of another person's experience there is an expectation that there will be a reference to something outside the subject and an element of interpretation. However, Johnson states that distinguishing between the elements of objectivity and subjectivity in a report is not always possible. This difficulty becomes more pronounced when considering religious experience, particularly when reading the appearance narratives. However, the objectivity of the disciples' encounters with the risen Christ becomes more obvious when one considers the key verb *ōphthē* used by the evangelists in the appearance narratives.

The use of the verb *ōphthē* by the evangelists is important as it is used exclusively in scripture to refer to an appearance of God. For example, the verb *ōphthē* is used in Genesis to describe how God appeared to Abraham as he rested in the entrance of his tent by the terebinth of Mamre (Gen 18:1). Likewise, in Exodus, *ōphthē* is used to describe how God appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3:2).⁸⁸⁷ It can be seen, therefore, that the verb *ōphthē* is embedded into the language of Old Testament theophany, the language of revelation. The verb *ōphthē* is best translated as "he appeared" or "let himself be seen," rather than "was seen by" (1 Cor 15:5-8, Lk 24:34, Acts 13:31).⁸⁸⁸ By utilising the verb *ōphthē* the evangelists convey both the act of Christ's appearing and the seeing activity of those who witnessed Him, along with the appearances transforming effects upon the disciples.⁸⁸⁹ Hence, the verb *ōphthē* accentuates the fact that, while the risen Christ may be absent from our perception in the ordinary sense of the word, He is always present and perceptible in faith.

This brings to the surface the fact that it is the risen Christ Himself who allows Himself to be

⁸⁸⁷ Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 708.

⁸⁸⁸ Gerald O'Collins, *The Easter Jesus* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Limited, 1973), 7-9. See also; *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 62.

⁸⁸⁹ Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 4.

seen, He is the *cause* of His own self-disclosure to the disciples and while the appearances of the risen Christ possess an important subjective character, it is obvious that there is also an equally significant objective dimension to them.

Although definitions by their nature are restrictive and experience itself possesses a complex character, Johnson provides a working definition of religious experience.⁸⁹⁰ He states that religious experience is:

...the human response to what is perceived as ultimate power, a response involving mind, body, and will as well as feeling, a response characterised by peculiar intensity, and one that issues an appropriate response.⁸⁹¹

From this definition it is clear, that far from detaching persons from ‘real life’, religious experience reflects what is most real in life. Johnson claims that such experiences involve an encounter with the holy, the mystery of the totally Other – an experience that “opens like a chasm before humans in unexpected ways, making impossible the denial of its presence.”⁸⁹²

Yet, there remains a tension; the human person is repulsed and attracted. This awesome power⁸⁹³ that the human person is confronted with by a religious experience is dangerous yet

⁸⁹⁰ However, it is important to highlight that Johnson is weary about providing a definition. He warns of the implications that can arise from attempting to confine religious experience to a mere definition. For instance, he highlights the short comings of Rudolf Otto’s psychological analysis of religious experience. Otto makes clear that religious experience must not be reduced to a matter of the mind or a matter of the will or even a matter of a specific feeling. Rather, for Otto, the participant can neither stay nor flee but is held in suspension between them. However, while Otto’s analysis brings the liminal dimension of religious experience to the fore, his treatment fails to distinguish between religious and aesthetic experience. However, when the socio-organisational insights of Gerardus Van der Leeuw and Mircea Eliade are read alongside Otto, says Johnson, the distinction between religious and aesthetic experience becomes more pronounced. See especially, Luke Timothy Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 60-64; Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 8-11, 136; Gerardus Van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation: A Study in Phenomenology*, trans. Ninian Smart and John Evan Turner, vol. 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 459-62.

⁸⁹¹ Johnson, *The New Testament: A Very Short Introduction*, 6.

⁸⁹² Ibid.

⁸⁹³ When speaking of the frequent appearance of the theme of power Johnson refers the reader to a range of terms with their cognates that are utilised by the New Testament writings. In particular, he highlights the term *exousia*, with its nuances of authority and freedom (Jn 1:12; 1 Cor 6:12; 8:9; 9:4; 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10; 2 Thess 3:9;

seductive. It organises existence around itself and commands attention, it is a definitively authoritative presence. For Johnson, this is the kind of presence that is eloquently expressed in the accounts of Christ's appearances after His death.

For Johnson, the religious dimension of human existence features prominently throughout the New Testament writings, especially in the appearance narratives. However, he suggests that biblical scholarship has remained ignorant to a significant range of statements that appear to be of "first importance to the writers of the New Testament."⁸⁹⁴ Johnson claims that such statements express fundamental convictions and demand some kind of account. He argues that all of these New Testament statements concern religious experience and suggests that our inability to deal with this catalogue of language has complex causes within scholarship, "including a bias in favor of theology against religion, and the lack of an epistemology specifically calibrated to the religious dimensions of human existence."⁸⁹⁵ However, Johnson draws attention to the fact that it would take great effort to read the New Testament, particularly the resurrection appearance narratives, without encountering statements on what the writers were either experiencing or had already experienced.⁸⁹⁶ Therefore, it can be claimed that the New Testament writings contain an impressive quantity of experiential language.

By the term 'experiential,' Johnson implies language that does not primarily state "propositions about reality (whether with reference to God or to humans) so much as to

Heb 13:10; Rev 2:26). Likewise, he draws attention to the term *energeia*, with its connotations of efficacy and energy (1 Cor 12:6, 11; 1 Thess 2:13; Phm 6; Gal 3:5; 5:6; Col 1:29; Eph 3:20-21). And finally, he observes the term *dynamis* (Rom 1:16; 15:13, 19; 1 Cor 1:18; 6:14; 12:3; 12:28; 14:31; 15:50; 2 Cor 1:4; 6:7; 8:3; 10:4; 12:9-10; 13:4. 9; Gal 3:5; Eph 3:20; 6:10; Phil 3:10, 21; 4:13; Col 1:29; 1 Thess 1:5; 2 Thess 2:11; 1 Tim 1:7; 2:1; 4:17; 1 Tim 1:12; Heb 2:4; James 1:21; 2:14; 4:12; 1 Pet 1:5; 2 Pet 1:16). See especially, *Johnson, Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*, 6.

⁸⁹⁴ Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*, 4.

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid.

express, refer to, and argue from human experiences.”⁸⁹⁷ This point is of particular importance when considering Johnson’s interpretation of the resurrection narratives. Here, he advocates a phenomenological approach to these narratives and suggests that such an approach is supported by the experiential claims expressed by St Paul,⁸⁹⁸ but such statements are not restricted to him. These claims also feature prominently in Luke-Acts. Johnson further maintains that such statements draw attention to the fact that something is happening to these people, and it is happening now.⁸⁹⁹ Briefly stated, claims to experience:

...are not based simply on records of what happened to others in the past or on fond hopes for what the future might hold, but on the witness of present participants.⁹⁰⁰

For Johnson, each of the appearance narratives involves an experience of transcendent power,⁹⁰¹ i.e. power of a unique kind. This form of power has nothing to do with societal ranks, it is not simply physical, although it involves natural bodies. It is not obviously mental, although it affects emotional and cognitive capacities. Neither is transcendent power definitely individual, although it is personal, nor is it exclusively social, although it has social consequences.⁹⁰² For Johnson then, these dynamic experiences of the transcendent and transformative power of the risen Christ highlight an integral dimension of Christian religious experience. The appearance narratives show that Christ is even more present and is encountered now in an even more personal way after His death than during His earthly life. Hence, for Johnson, when one observes the shared meals of the Jesus’ followers after His death, one can see that they do not simply point to a future hope but to a present reality. This

⁸⁹⁷ Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*, 4.

⁸⁹⁸ See especially, Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, 18 vols., vol. 5, Sacra Pagina (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 161-70.

⁸⁹⁹ Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*, 5.

⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁹⁰¹ Johnson gives a detailed treatment of this point within the context of St Paul’s Damascus experience in Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 5, 161-70.

⁹⁰² Johnson, *The New Testament: A Very Short Introduction*, 6-7.

reality is the communal experience of the continuing mystery of the living Jesus in His state of resurrection.

5.3.2. *Shared Meals: the Communal Dimension of Encounters with the Risen Christ*

Johnson demonstrates that while there are many discrepancies amongst the appearance narratives, one aspect that is common to the accounts is that each narrative possesses a prominent communal character.⁹⁰³ In each of the descriptions of the disciples' encounters with the risen Jesus after His death, Christ always appears where there is more than one of his followers gathered. Such a communal context is foretold in the Gospel of Matthew, "[F]or where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them" (Mt 18:20). In the Easter narratives, this context reaches its climax:⁹⁰⁴ in Matthew 28:9-10 one reads of Jesus' appearance to the *two* women as they left the empty tomb and again Matthew 28:11-15 one reads of His appearance to the *eleven* on the mountain in Galilee. Other examples of the communal nature of the appearance narratives are as follows: in Mark one finds that Jesus appears to the *two* disciples on their way into the country (Mk 16:12-13) and then to the *eleven* while they were at table (Mk 16:14-15). Also, in Luke one reads of Jesus' appearance to the *two* disciples on the road to Emmaus while *they* broke bread (Lk 24:13-33), then to the apostles as *they* gathered together (Lk 24:36-43). In Luke 24:50-52 one reads of Jesus' ascension into heaven when He is surrounded by *all* the apostles, in John 20:19-29 there is an account of Jesus appearing to His disciples as *they* gathered in the upper room followed by John 21:1-15 where Jesus appears to the *group* of disciples fishing by the shore of Tiberias and *they* also share a meal with Him

⁹⁰³ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 3, 400-06.

⁹⁰⁴ Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, 18 vols., vol. 1, Sacra Pagina (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 271. Here, Harrington suggests that the evangelist's words should be interpreted in the context or framework of reconciliation within the community.

These examples it is clear that each of the evangelists both describe and suggest that the coming together of a community in Jesus' name is integral to the disciples' encounters with the risen Christ. This point is further emphasised when one reads that the evangelist Luke begins the story of the Church in Acts with the disciples gathered together witnessing Christ's ascension into heaven (Acts 1:6-11). Johnson also stresses that Luke's Easter narratives provide a subtly shaded interpretation of the mode of Jesus' presence to humankind after His resurrection.⁹⁰⁵ The emphasis placed by the evangelist suggests that the coming together of the community is integral to Christians' encounters with the risen Christ now in His transfigured state. In particular, Johnson observes how in Luke's narrative of the appearance on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35) Christ is emphatically present in the ritual gestures of a community fellowship meal.⁹⁰⁶ According to Johnson, Luke, conveys to the reader that the ritual gestures of the disciples' community fellowship meal are an integral aspect to the "process of telling and interpreting these diverse experiences,"⁹⁰⁷ and that it is through such action that the community encounter the risen Christ and experience the astonishment of His full presence. Johnson suggests that Luke provides, "by the very length and detail of this story (Lk 24:13-35), an emotionally satisfying bridge between the shock of absence [empty tomb] and the shock of full presence [the appearance to the community]."⁹⁰⁸

Johnson also argues that the ritual action of the disciples described in the Easter narratives not only contributed to the development of a community narrative, but actually began to create the community itself.⁹⁰⁹ He claims that the significance of communal meals for the followers of Christ after His death is conveyed in references in Acts to "the breaking of

⁹⁰⁵ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 3, 398.

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid. See also, Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*, 138-41, 64-79.

⁹⁰⁷ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 3, 399.

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid., 398.

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid., 399. See also; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 5, 186-88; *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*, 138-41.

bread”⁹¹⁰ (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7; 27:35) and “by the importance of table-fellowship in the conversion of the Gentiles (Acts 2:9-16, 41; 11:3; 15:9, 20, 29).”⁹¹¹ Johnson goes on to show that there is an intimate connection between the Easter encounters and the emergence of the Holy Spirit as the symbol of transformative power.

5.3.3. *The Holy Spirit as the Symbol of Encounter with the Risen Christ*

Johnson observes that the resurrection experience cannot be confined to the Gospel narratives as it was acquired by those who did not see the empty tomb or experience the risen Christ in the manner described by the evangelists. This new mode of experience is alluded to in John’s Gospel where the risen Christ says to Thomas “...blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” (Jn 20:29). This new mode becomes more pronounced when one reads Luke’s Acts. Here, Luke makes clear that the risen Christ’s presence is “just as strong after the ascension as before it, indeed stronger; but it is a presence in a new mode”⁹¹² and that Christians are experiencing the power of the continuing presence of Christ post His ascension in a mode that is “personal, transcendent, and transforming...within the community.”⁹¹³

Elizabeth Johnson’s insights support the above concept; Johnson highlights the importance of recognising that, while the appearance narratives speak of the religious experiences of the disciples, “by their nature as Gospel, written from faith for faith, their inner dynamics characterise the story of every believer and every believing community throughout time.”⁹¹⁴

She places further emphasis on this point stating that “[T]hey are written so that we might

⁹¹⁰ Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*, 139; *The Acts of the Apostles*, 5, 45-47, 53-55, 60-63, 199-201, 267-73, 278-80. Here, Johnson suggest that is also important to include the “daily *diakonia*” in Acts 6:1-6. He claims that it is important to include this as according to Peter’s declaration, it was a ‘*diakonia trapezēs*’ (6:2).

⁹¹¹ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 5, 45-47, 53-55, 60-63, 199-201, 267-73, 278-80; *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*, 139.

⁹¹² Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 102.

⁹¹³ Ibid.

⁹¹⁴ Elizabeth A. Johnson, "And Their Eye Were Opened: The Resurrection as Resource for Transforming Leadership" (paper presented at the CMSM/LCWR Joint Assembly, Anaheim CA, 1995), 2.

experience the same conversion process and be ourselves caught up in the same gracious, life-giving mystery in the midst of discouragement and death.”⁹¹⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson stresses that these new experiences are only made possible by the fact that Jesus is alive and *causes* them.⁹¹⁶ This position gives significant support to the following insights raised by Luke Timothy Johnson concerning the uniqueness of the various encounters with the risen Christ following His ascension.

According to Luke Timothy Johnson, after Jesus’ ascension a new dimension emerges concerning the mode of encounter with the risen Christ. Johnson outlines that this new mode of encounter is saturated by the Holy Spirit. He observes that in Acts there is an intimate connection between experiencing the risen Christ and the reception of the Holy Spirit (cf 1 Cor 15:45).⁹¹⁷ According to Johnson, this dimension emerges through Jesus’ resurrection and ascension – He has been transformed and has now become ‘life-giving Spirit’.⁹¹⁸ This point becomes clear when it is noted that the participants of these new encounters with the risen Christ speak of personal experiences in terms of the reception of the Holy Spirit of which the risen Christ is the source (Acts 2:1-4, 17-21, 32-33, 36, 38). With this new-found reception of the Spirit, there is a clear sense of the empowerment of the disciples,⁹¹⁹ a dimension which is inseparable from the commissioning of the disciples, the proclamation of the mystery of Christ and the reconciliation of all sins in Him.⁹²⁰

This understanding of the resurrection is given expression not only in Acts, but also in the Four Gospels. For example, in John 20:21-23 the risen Jesus tells His followers “[A]s the father sent me, even so I send you,” then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy

⁹¹⁵ Johnson, "And Their Eye Were Opened: The Resurrection as Resource for Transforming Leadership", 2.

⁹¹⁶ Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 102.

⁹¹⁷ Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 102.

⁹¹⁸ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Living Jesus: Learning the Heart of the Gospel* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999), 195.

⁹¹⁹ Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 102.

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.*

Spirit.” After the disciples receive of the Holy Spirit there is an immediate empowerment given to them to proclaim the reconciliation and forgiveness of all sins in the glorified Christ. For instance, the risen Jesus says to them “[I]f you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (Jn 20:21-23). Likewise, in Luke 24:47-49 the risen Christ gives a similar command to the disciples, “[Y]ou are the witnesses of all things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with the power from on high.” Again, in Matthew 28:19 the intimate connection between encountering the risen Christ and the sending forth of the disciples is accentuated “[G]o, therefore, make disciples of all nations” and likewise in Mark, one reads of the disciples’ response to their resurrection experience “...after he had spoken to them, [he] was taken up into heaven; there at the right hand of God he took his place, while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by signs that accompanied it” (Mk 16:19-20). Therefore, according to Johnson, “[T]he possession of the Holy Spirit is the experiential correlative to the confession that Jesus is Lord.”⁹²¹ However, he notes that when one moves away from the narrative material to the statements evident in other New Testament writings, this relationship is even more clearly described.⁹²²

Throughout this discussion, Johnson speaks of the disciples’ encounters with the risen Christ as experiences of power and it is clear now from a consideration of his insights that the term ‘power’ refers to the Holy Spirit. Johnson further states that, “for all practical purposes, we can say that *symbol* of the Holy Spirit in these writings corresponds to the experiential term ‘power’.”⁹²³ It has previously been observed that the communal dimension of the appearances narratives is of the utmost importance to the disciples’ encounters with the risen Christ, especially in the context of the shared meal. Now, it is important to consider the communal

⁹²¹ Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 103.

⁹²² Ibid.

⁹²³ Ibid.

context which Johnson brings to bear within the context of the bestowal of Holy Spirit upon believers.

Johnson proposes that according to Acts 2:38 the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon believers “when they entered into the community.”⁹²⁴ He observes that, in the material found outside the Gospel tradition, it is the Holy Spirit who works mighty deeds among believers (Gal 3:3-5), empowering them to proclaim (Act 4:8; 1 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 1:6) and to “confess their faith in the first place.”⁹²⁵ Paul writes in 1 Cor 12:3 that: “[N]o one speaking by the Spirit can say, ‘Jesus be cursed,’ and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” Johnson further emphasises it was “the Holy Spirit that brought about this transformation of their consciousness”⁹²⁶ through their communal encounters with the risen Christ (1 Cor 2:12; Tt 3:5). Therefore, it can be said, that the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force, but the life-giving presence of the risen Christ. Paul makes this explicit in Gal 4:6, “[B]ecause you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father” and, again in an even more pronounced manner in 2 Cor 3:17-18:

[N]ow the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory into another; for this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Johnson draws attention to the explicit connection made by Paul in Rom 8:11 between the Holy Spirit and the resurrection:

[I]f the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through the Spirit which dwells in you.

⁹²⁴ Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 103.

⁹²⁵ Ibid.

⁹²⁶ Ibid.

Finally, Paul makes a synthesising statement in an extended discussion on Jesus' resurrection in 1 Cor 15:45, "[T]he first man became a living being; the last Adam became life-giving spirit." Johnson suggests then that it is clear from these statements that there is an "explicit correlation between the resurrection confession ["Jesus is Lord"] and the experience of the Holy Spirit"⁹²⁷ – a correlation which forms an integral aspect of the Easter belief of early Christian communities. Hence, it is clear that the Holy Spirit was the symbol used by early believers to speak of their transformative encounters with the powerful presence of the transfigured and glorified Christ who is now present to humankind in the mode of the life-giving Spirit. Now we turn our attention to Sandra Schneiders' treatment of the resurrection where she gives consideration the resurrection within the context of the Gospel of John, perhaps the most sacramentally charged writings of the entire New Testament.

5.4. Sandra Schneiders and the Johannine Resurrection Narratives

5.5.1. Seeing and Believing in the Transfigured Christ

While Sandra Schneiders' book *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*⁹²⁸ was not solely concerned with Jesus' resurrection, Gerald O'Collins is quick to highlight that the subtitle of her book could well have been "Encountering the *Risen* Jesus in and through the Fourth Gospel."⁹²⁹ This point find is supported by the fact that Schneiders makes clear in her writing that the Fourth Gospels' portrayal of Jesus does not reflect a presence akin to mere historical memory. Rather, it speaks of Christ as a personal living presence. Schneiders suggests that this dimension of Johannine literature emerges when one considers that the evangelist – throughout his entire text and particularly in the narratives describing encounters with Christ – invites the reader not to return to the past but

⁹²⁷ Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 104.

⁹²⁸ Sandra M. Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999).

⁹²⁹ O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 8.

to relate to the present in faith.⁹³⁰ According to Schneiders, the evangelist does not suggest that such an action is without its difficulties; in fact, she observes that the Fourth Gospel, in the account of the man born blind (Jn 9:1-41), brings this to the reader's attention. Here, the evangelist emphasises the fact that seeing and responding to the risen Christ's presence is not only difficult for people of the present era, but rather the story emphasises that such action posed an incredible challenge to believers of every age.⁹³¹

While this story belongs to the history of the pre-Easter Jesus, Schneiders suggests that such episodes go beyond the past by raising provocative and timeless questions. O'Collins agrees and also suggests that the Fourth Gospel presents the reader with the striking question, "[D]o you here and now experience in Jesus the One who is utterly true and good and brings us the face of God? [If so] are you willing to become His disciple, and so 'have life in his name' (Jn 20:31)?"⁹³² It was highlighted earlier that Elizabeth Johnson attributes this dimension to all of the evangelist's resurrection narratives.⁹³³ However, Schneiders emphasises that this provocative invitation finds greater expression in the Fourth Gospel than in the other three. She emphasises that it is not only the narratives of Jesus resurrection in the Fourth Gospel that invite the reader to give witness to the risen Jesus, but rather the entire Gospel which invites a response in faith to the living presence of the risen Christ in the here and now.

Schneiders observes that the Fourth Gospel makes clear the risen Christ continues to be intimately present in and among the community of believers (Jn 15:15).⁹³⁴ From this standpoint, it can be said that, for Schneiders, Jesus' resurrection is something much greater than a matter of historical debate. Rather, she suggests that it brings an existential problem, a spiritual challenge, and a personal relationship to the surface. In her analysis, Schneiders

⁹³⁰ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 23-24.

⁹³¹ *Ibid.*, 149-70.

⁹³² O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus*, 9.

⁹³³ See above, 219.

⁹³⁴ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 117-79.

states that the “Johannine resurrection narrative is one of the literary jewels of the New Testament.”⁹³⁵ She emphasises that the Easter narratives in John’s Gospel can only be appropriately interpreted when they are recognised within the theology of the entire text. Schneiders illustrates how this point becomes clear when one observes that chapter 20 of John’s Gospel merely utilises the “traditional resurrection material to involve the reader narratively in the accomplishment of that which was theologically expounded in the discourses.”⁹³⁶ Thus, of particular importance is the evangelist when narrating Jesus’ resurrection is the way in which humankind encounters the risen Jesus and discovers the revelation of divine glory through symbol or what Schneiders refers to as “a genuine Johannine *sēmeion*.”⁹³⁷

Schneiders maintains that the evangelist’s use of term ‘face veil’⁹³⁸ (Jn 20:1-10) which the Beloved Disciple saw upon his arrival and Peter upon entering the empty tomb has significant meaning.⁹³⁹ She suggests that John uses the term to symbolise the life in the flesh of the unglorified Jesus”.⁹⁴⁰ Such symbolism, according to Schneiders, is consistent with John’s “symbolic use of Old Testament realities, which, in the Fourth Gospel, take on their full

⁹³⁵ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 57.

⁹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 187-88.

⁹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁹³⁸ Schneiders highlights that an enormous amount of scholarship is available concerning the word ‘face veil’. However, she directs us to one work in particular, F.-M Braun, *Le Linceul De Turin Et L'évangile De S. Jean: Etude De Critique Et D'exégèse* (Tournai/Paris: Casterman, 1939).

⁹³⁹ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 187-88. It is also interesting to note that many commentators have interpreted the importance which the evangelist attaches to the fact that Peter entered the tomb first in various ways. One manner of interpretation that they have suggested is that the evangelist emphasises on the fact that Peter entered the tomb immediately upon arrival as signifying his ecclesiastical pre-eminence, or that it represented Peter's priority of Jewish Christians in the order of evangelisation, unlike the Beloved Disciple who did not enter the tomb immediately yet ‘saw and believed’ signified his readiness of faith. See Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. Geogre R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 685; Thus Rudolf Schnackenburg, "Der Jünger, Den Jesus Liebt," in *Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament*, Vorarbeiten Heft 2 (Zurich: Benziger, 1970), 97-117.

⁹⁴⁰ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 186.

meaning only when they are illuminated by the words and works of Jesus.”⁹⁴¹ She argues that this symbolism and its significance become clear when one considers the word ‘face veil’ itself and the difference in the response of the two disciples upon seeing the veil.

Schneiders observes that the word ‘face veil’ appears only four times in the New Testament: “twice in John (11:44 and 20:7) and in Luke 19:20 and Acts 19:2 where it clearly means ‘napkin’ or ‘handkerchief’.”⁹⁴² However, she claims that John also uses the word when speaking of the veil which covered the face of Lazarus (11:14) and the cloth covering Jesus’ face (20:7).⁹⁴³ Here, the word ‘face veil’ is actually a Greek transliteration of the Latin *sudarium* which means ‘handkerchief’. Of greater interest is its meaning in the Aramaic of Targums (*Neofiti* and *Jonathan*).⁹⁴⁴ In this context, Schneiders observes that while the term is used to translate the Hebrew word for ‘veil’, “the Hebrew word used in Exodus 34:33-35 is not an ordinary Hebrew word,”⁹⁴⁵ rather, it is a unique word utilised only for the face veil of Moses.

According to recent scholarship, John’s community initially consisted of Palestinian Jews,⁹⁴⁶ and Schneiders suggests that such a community would have been familiar with the Old Testament in Targum form, and the word ‘face veil’ utilised by the evangelist would “immediately have recalled to them the face veil of Moses”⁹⁴⁷ in a manner that the word *Kalymma*, which appears elsewhere in the New Testament, would not. In John’s narrative of the empty tomb the symbolism being employed becomes clear. Here, one reads that the face veil in the tomb was not dropped or left as the burial cloths were, but that it was “definitively

⁹⁴¹ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 186.

⁹⁴² *Ibid.*, 185.

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* See especially, Raymond E. Brown, "Johannine Ecclesiology-the Community's Origins," *Interpretation* 31 (1977), 380-83, 385-87.

⁹⁴⁷ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 186.

wrapped up beside them.”⁹⁴⁸ Schneiders states that “[L]ike Moses, who put aside the veil when he ascended to meet God in glory, Jesus, the new Moses, has put aside the veil of his flesh as He ascends into the presence of God to receive from God that glory which He had with the Father before the world was made (Jn 17:11).”⁹⁴⁹ The risen Christ, unlike Moses, does not reassume the veil each time he returns from God to the community; rather, “the new Moses has definitively laid aside the veil, for now He is no longer in this world, He has gone to the Father.”⁹⁵⁰ According to Schneiders, this symbolic use of the veil of Moses to contrast the old and new covenants “was not unfamiliar to the early Church.” This point finds much support when one observes Paul’s extended reference to it in 2 Cor 3:7-8.⁹⁵¹

From this standpoint, Schneiders argues that the face veil is a “genuine *sēmeion*, i.e. a perceptible reality that mediates the revelation of God in Jesus.”⁹⁵² Therefore, when one observes the response of the Beloved Disciple upon *seeing* the veil, “He both saw and believed,” his reaction presents itself as the perfect response. Schneiders states that “Peter’s failure to believe makes clear to the reader that Paschal faith is not *deduced* from the contents of the tomb as from a physical proof of resurrection. The Paschal believing of the Beloved Disciple is the faith response to revelation encountered in sign.”⁹⁵³ Hence, interpreting the narrative in this way is consistent with what is evoked by symbols throughout the Fourth Gospel. This gives further support to Schneiders’ emphasis that the resurrection narratives in John can only be appropriately interpreted when they are understood within the theological context of the entire Gospel.

⁹⁴⁸ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 186.

⁹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵¹ Here, St. Paul speaks of the veil covering the minds of unconverted Jews until it is taken away by the risen Christ.

⁹⁵² Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 186.

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*

What emerges from a consideration of the Johannine symbolism of the veil is a reminder of the capacity that symbols possess to mediate and reveal the mystery of Christ after His death, that is, in His absence.⁹⁵⁴ Schneiders makes this clear stating that, “symbols far from being dead or empty ‘stand-ins’ for something other than themselves, are perceptible realities that mediate transcendent reality.”⁹⁵⁵ This manner of Johannine symbolism emerges in an even more pronounced manner in John 21. Additionally, it is important we highlighted that, while we have observed that the Beloved Disciple, upon seeing the veil, immediately ‘believed’, it is essential that here the word ‘believe’ is interpreted in the absolute (John 20:8).⁹⁵⁶ Schneiders emphasises that the absolute use of ‘believe’ in the Fourth Gospel signifies an “active spiritual state of personal adherence to Jesus the revealer and readiness for whatever He will do.”⁹⁵⁷ Similar to the synoptic Gospels, it is not until the appearances of the risen Christ that it is revealed in the Fourth Gospel that “Jesus has also returned to His own to take up His abode in them, constituting them as His presence in the world.”⁹⁵⁸

5.5.2. *Encountering the Risen Christ: Contemplation and Mission*

Schneiders states that the concerns raised by scholars surrounding the authorship of John 21 do not diminish the significance of this chapter.⁹⁵⁹ Rather, she emphasises that, regardless of who penned John 21, it presents an integral aspect of the Gospel as it is in “fundamental theological continuity with chapters 1-20.”⁹⁶⁰ Schneiders further argues that, while the purpose of John 21 is to bring the Gospel account to a close the manner in which it does so is significant to the message being proclaimed. Schneiders highlights that John 21 transfers the

⁹⁵⁴ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 63-77. Here, Schneiders outlines that symbolism is the hermeneutical key to the Fourth Gospel.

⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 202. See also, Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 6, 18-20, 34-36.

⁹⁵⁶ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 186-87.

⁹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 202. The issue here concerns whether it was the evangelist who penned John 21 or a later member of the Johannine community.

⁹⁶⁰ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 202.

reader's attention "from the experience of the first disciples with the historical Jesus to the experience of the contemporary church with the glorified Jesus, from the story of those who *saw* to the story of those 'who *believe* without having seen' (Jn 20:29)."⁹⁶¹

According to Schneiders what comes to the attention on reading John 21:1-14, is that it is a "clearly delineated unit beginning with the notation that Jesus *manifested* himself *again* to the disciples (Jn 21:1) and ending with the notation that this was the *third* time Jesus was *manifested* to the *disciples* (21:14)."⁹⁶² Furthermore, Schneiders outlines that John 21:1-14 is divided into two parts: "a narrative about the mysterious catch of fish (Jn 21:2-8) and a dialogue within the context of a mysterious meal (21:9-13)."⁹⁶³ These two parts of the pericope are unified by two themes: "the manifestation or revelation of Jesus to his disciples and their recognition of him; the relationship of two central roles in the community of disciples, namely, contemplation and mission, represented by the related activities of the Beloved Disciple and Simon Peter."⁹⁶⁴

In the first section, the first unifying theme emerges and one reads that the disciples, having gone fishing, failed to catch any fish but at the command of a stranger they cast their nets at the *right hand side* of the boat and find themselves with an enormous shoal. At this moment, the Beloved Disciple, who is the privileged locus of and witness to God's self-revelation, cry's out "It is the Lord." Immediately, Peter responds to this revelatory proclamation by jumping into the water, while the rest of the disciples reach the shore by boat.⁹⁶⁵ Here one finds an account of Jesus' manifestation to the disciples and their recognition of Him. This is

⁹⁶¹ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 202.

⁹⁶² *Ibid.*, 203. All emphasises are from the original Schneiders text.

⁹⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* Furthermore, Schneiders claims that Peter's action has little to significance, narratively, but coming to Jesus through water in response to the proclamation of his identity would easily bring to the surface for a Christian reader many Baptismal images for the Christian reader is acutely aware that new birth comes by water and Spirit (Jn 3:5).

even more pronounced in the second part of the pericope, where Jesus asks the disciples to share a meal which He has prepared for them. When treating this section, Schneiders maintains that the evangelist purposefully evokes the Eucharistically charged account of John 6 when he writes that Jesus “took the bread and gave it to them and so with the fish (Jn 21:13).”⁹⁶⁶ Here, it would be to diminish John’s intentional evocation of Eucharistic symbolism if we were to ignore the evangelist’s Eucharistically charged John 6.

Until recently, many considered John 6 to be merely a distant promise of the Eucharist made by Jesus that would only come to fruition when His life had ended. However, Luis Bermejo states that what was considered to be a promise of the Eucharist in John 6 “is not a promise at all but rather the fullness of the Eucharistic reality.”⁹⁶⁷ Bermejo states that John 6 must be interpreted against the backdrop of the Old Testament manna but in its later symbolic meaning as “the symbol of the word of God that nourishes man.”⁹⁶⁸ Bermejo states that “[R]abbinic sources commentating on Joshua 5:10-12 state that manna fell for the last time on 14 of Nisan and is stored now in heaven against the day when the Messiah will appear.”⁹⁶⁹ Hence, the manna in the Old Testament is intimately connected to the Passover, but it is also linked to the coming of the Messiah. There is clear reference to this in John 6:49, “[Y]our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread that has come down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die.” However, here the symbolism of the manna takes on new meaning: it is no longer only the symbol of the *word* of God it is also the symbol of the *Word* of God. In John 6 the desert manna “points to the person of the glorified Jesus, the real bread of life.”⁹⁷⁰

⁹⁶⁶ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 204.

⁹⁶⁷ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 175.

⁹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 183.

Bermejo emphasises that the evangelist intentionally brings the “majestic transcendence of Jesus”⁹⁷¹ to the reader’s attention in chapter 6. In the climax of the chapter, Jesus’ earlier identification as the bread of life (Jn 6:35, 41, 48) comes to be associated with the bread and His own flesh, “...and this bread that I shall give you is my flesh” (Jn 6:51). At the beginning of the Fourth Gospel we read that “[T]he Word became flesh” (Jn 1:14), now the evangelist makes clear that “the same flesh is now rendered edible under the form of bread” (Jn 6:51).⁹⁷² Bermejo states that in these verses the evangelist is moving now “in the dense Eucharistic atmosphere of the Last Supper. No promise of Eucharist, this [is], but rather its full reality.”⁹⁷³ Rudolf Bultmann also makes this point, stating that John 6:53 “unmistakably refers to the Lord’s Supper, since now the drinking of the blood is added to the eating of the flesh.”⁹⁷⁴ Hence, Bermejo states that “the words of Jesus can only be taken in the Eucharistic sense which the primitive community understood them. They simply echo the words of the institution.”⁹⁷⁵

Returning to John 21 one finds the evangelist evoking the actions and identification made by Jesus with the bread of life, now in edible form in John 6. However, in His state of resurrection, the now glorified Jesus shares with His disciples *the bread from heaven* which acts as a point of encounter between Him and the disciples. It is an encounter in which His followers come to know Him, now in His resurrected state. Yet, Schneiders is quick to illustrate, that similar to the way in which the actions of Jesus revealed His identity to the disciples at Emmaus (Lk 24:30-31), in John 21:12 “it is a mysterious knowing that leaves room for a desire to question.”⁹⁷⁶ Now, Schneiders turns her attention to the second unifying

⁹⁷¹ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 183.

⁹⁷² *Ibid.*, 181-83.

⁹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 183. See also, Francis J. Moloney and Anthony J. Kelly, *Experiencing God in the Gospel of John* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2003), 144-68.

⁹⁷⁴ Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 235.

⁹⁷⁵ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, 183.

⁹⁷⁶ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 204.

theme of the pericope which the evangelist develops through the relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple.⁹⁷⁷ She highlights the way in which the evangelist identifies Peter as the one who takes the initiative in going fishing and Peter as the one who responds to Jesus' command to bring in some of the fish.⁹⁷⁸

Interestingly, Schneiders brings further connotations of the Eucharist to the surface. She claims that this command (Jn 21:10) echo's Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper, in which He prays that His disciples will be with Him where He is to see the glory that God had given to Him as pre-existent Son (Jn 17:21). She also observes that when ones read about the large catch of fish that was only made possible by Jesus' command, the evangelist is symbolically speaking of "the universal mission of the Church carried out by those who without Jesus can do nothing (Jn 15:5) but who will be fruitful as long as they abide in Him and obey His commands."⁹⁷⁹ Schneiders also maintains that, like to the seamless tunic of the crucified Jesus, the net remains unbroken or untorn. She suggests that this is of symbolic importance to the evangelist and emphasises that the unity of the Church is a "primary theme in the Fourth Gospel, the subject of Jesus' final prayer on the night before He died (Jn 17:20-21) and, by the time the Gospel was written, already a matter of some concern for the Johannine church threatened with various kinds of disunity."⁹⁸⁰ In the resurrection narrative, one reads of Peter – apparently single-headedly – dragging the net of fish ashore, even though all the disciples together were unable to do so. Schneiders explains that "the narrative incongruity only serves to focus the reader's attention on the obvious intention of the writer to portray Peter as the

⁹⁷⁷ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 204.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid.

leader of the expedition.”⁹⁸¹ The evangelist makes clear that it is Peter who will lead the *mission* of the Church in which he will no longer catch fish but living persons (Jn 21:15-17).

Hence, it can be said that the evangelist brings the missionary dimension of Jesus’ resurrection to the fore narratively in his portrayal of Peter in John 21. However, the contemplative dimension of Jesus’ resurrection, which is intimately linked with mission in John 21, emerges through the evangelist’s portrayal of the Beloved Disciple. Schneiders makes this point clear, stating that “the Beloved Disciple, who rested on the bosom of Jesus (Jn 13:23, 21:20), is John’s paradigmatic embodiment of contemplative openness to the revelation of Jesus, just as the Word made flesh who dwelt in the bosom of God was the incarnation of God’s self-revelation to the world (Jn 1:1, 18).”⁹⁸² In John 21 it is the Beloved Disciple who, upon arriving at the tomb and again, seeing Jesus on the shore, recognises the risen Jesus with “perfect clarity and proclaims Him authoritatively.”⁹⁸³

According to Schneiders, “Peter’s recognition of and coming to Jesus is a response to that proclamation which, in a sense, grounds his pastoral leadership.”⁹⁸⁴ For Schneiders, it is clear that the evangelist in chapter 21 is attempting to clarify for the post-resurrection community the relationship between two constitutive activities of the Church, namely: “contemplation, through which revelation is received, and ministry, through which it is mediated.”⁹⁸⁵ Furthermore, she states that John 21 makes clear that “[C]ontemplative receptivity to the life-giving revelation in Jesus is the source of the Church’s proclamation, which grounds both the faith of the disciples and the Church’s mission to the world.”⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁸¹ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 204.

⁹⁸² *Ibid.*, 205.

⁹⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Schneiders maintains that John 21 is situated after the cessation of the Easter appearances. She emphasises that the evangelist alerts the reader to this point throughout the narrative. For example, Jesus foretells Peter's martyrdom (Jn 21:18-19) and the evangelist also makes reference to the death of the Beloved Disciple (Jn 21:22-23).⁹⁸⁷ From this standpoint it is clear that this closing chapter of the gospel (Jn 21) is a "symbolic presentation of the life of the Church in the time after the resurrection."⁹⁸⁸ She suggests that this may in fact give ample reason for the evangelists "repetition at 21:25 of the conclusion in 20:30-31."⁹⁸⁹ Furthermore, she highlights that 'first' conclusion to the gospel is definitive, in that it brought to a close "the account of all that Jesus did 'in the presence of His disciples,' both during His public life and throughout the paschal mystery."⁹⁹⁰ Schneiders states that "[T]hese signs, carefully selected from among the many (though finite number) that the historical Jesus did, which ended with the Easter appearances, have now been transformed into scripture for the salvation of subsequent generations who believe in Jesus through the word."⁹⁹¹

Schneiders argues, however, that "the second conclusion is to the *ongoing* story of all the "many other things" (Jn 21:25) that Jesus *continues* to do."⁹⁹² John 21 concerns the present reality of the risen life of Christ and our relationship with Him. We read of the "obedience to the words of Jesus by His disciples resulting in fruitful ministry that must someday bring to salvation the whole world whom Jesus was sent to save (Jn 3:16) but who will now be drawn to Jesus by His disciples (Jn 21:14:12)...and the ongoing sharing of life with Jesus through contemplative experience of Eucharistic community faith."⁹⁹³ Unlike the first conclusion, the second conclusion is not definitive – it is open-ended. The experience narrated by the

⁹⁸⁷ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 207.

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹⁹² Ibid.

⁹⁹³ Ibid.

evangelist in John 21 will continue to be actualised every time the proclamation resounds, “It is the Lord,” and the community sits down to table with the risen Jesus.⁹⁹⁴

5.6. Conclusion

In carrying out an analysis of the resurrection narratives, it has been shown that while there are discrepancies between the Easter narratives, particular themes present themselves in the all the New Testament accounts. When observing Wright’s approach to the resurrection, one sees that in the narratives the evangelist’s are speaking of revelatory-events, occurrences in time and space, when the risen Christ disclosed Himself to the disciples. Here, we observe that the disciples encountered and recognised the risen Christ in the action of breaking the bread (Lk 24:31). Furthermore, one observes the emphasis placed by Wright on the importance of understanding that Luke, in his Emmaus narrative, also turns the reader’s attention to the manner in which the disciples come to recognise the risen Christ through their reflection on the scriptures (Lk 24:32). In these actions the disciples came to encounter the risen Christ in a new and unique way.

Later, one observes the claim made by Luke Timothy Johnson that these new and unique encounters as seen in the resurrection narratives are best understood as religious experiences. He makes clear that in the narratives the evangelist’s are describing what the disciples came to experience as the totally Other in the risen Christ. By observing Gerald O’Collins’ analysis of the verb *ōphthē* and its connotations of Old Testament theophany language, it was shown that the disciples’ experiences involve both subjective and objective dimensions. Johnson makes clear that the appearance narratives possesses a strong communal character. In the Easter narratives, the evangelist’s describe that the disciples encounters with the risen Christ occur always when two or more of the disciples are gathered (Mt 28:9-10, 11-15; Mk 16:12-13, 14-15; Lk 24:13-33, 36-43, 50-52; Jn 20:19-29, 21:1-15). It has been made clear that

⁹⁹⁴ Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 207.

these encounters with the risen Christ were experiences of transcendent power. One observes Johnson's emphasises that this power was the Holy Spirit. He made clear that it was by the power of the Holy Spirit that the disciples were transformed and sent forth by Christ to proclaim the reconciliation and forgiveness of all sins in Him. Hence, the intimate connection between the disciples encounters with the risen Christ, the transformative power of the Holy Spirit and the reconciliation and forgiveness of sins is clear.

In Sandra Schneiders' approach to the Johannine resurrection narratives it has been shown that symbols have an innate capacity to mediate and reveal the mystery of the risen Christ now in His absence. She illustrated that the disciples' community fellowships meals act as a point of encounter between them and the risen Christ. Through the symbolic action of the communal meal, the risen Christ was encountered and personally present with the disciples. Schneiders brings the intimate relationship between the disciples' encounters with the risen Christ and mission to the surface. She makes clear that in their encounters the disciples are sent forth by Christ Himself in mission.

In conclusion, therefore, from an analysis of the Easter events, it can be said that five aspects emerge quite strongly within the context of the disciples' encounters with the risen Christ, namely: [1] the centrality of the community, [2] the table-fellowship of the disciples, [3] the disciples' reflection and proclamation of the scriptures, [4] the reconciliation and forgiveness of sin and [5] Christ's sending-forth of the disciples in mission. These five dimensions present themselves as being integral to the disciples' encounters with the risen Christ. Interestingly, they also reflect the actions of Jesus as revealed in His public earthly ministry. Furthermore, each of these dimensions presents a strong connotation of the Eucharist. In fact, all five features come together and find their fullest expression in the Church's Eucharist action which acts as a point of encounter between the community of believers and the risen Christ. By engaging with these five aspects, one's understanding of the Eucharist is enriched,

especially one's appreciation of the various ways in which the Eucharist brings us into intimate contact with the risen Christ. The following chapter will highlight how the resurrection narratives help give a deeper understanding and an enhanced appreciation of the dynamic nature of the Eucharistic celebration.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

In the last chapter one observed that five themes emerged from a consideration of the resurrection: [1] the centrality of the community; [2] the table-fellowship of the disciples; [3] the disciples' reflection and proclamation of the scriptures; [4] the reconciliation and forgiveness of sin; [5] Christ's sending-forth of the disciples in mission. Here, it will be shown that these themes are not only important characteristics of Jesus' resurrection appearances, but also of His public ministry and of the early Christian community. Following from this, it will be shown that these themes find their fullest expression in the entire symbolic action of the Eucharist. From this standpoint it becomes clear, that the dynamic nature of the Eucharist, which brings one into intimate contact with the risen Jesus, expresses the continuation of the mystery revealed in Christ most fully because it the risen *Kyrios* who is the dynamism of the Eucharist, He is its source and centre.

6.1. The Continuation of the Mystery Revealed in Christ

[1] *The Centrality of the Community*

The New Testament writings make clear that the building and sustaining of community is an important feature of Jesus' public ministry. When one observes 'what Jesus did and taught' it becomes clear that it would be inconceivable for a disciple of Jesus to remain alone.⁹⁹⁵ The community dimension of Jesus' public life is embedded in His proclamation of the solidarity of the Kingdom of God, but it can also said that His public life as a whole is saturated by the dynamism of 'communitas'. Here, it is important to stress that *communitas* is not simply

⁹⁹⁵ Eamonn Bredin, *Disturbing the Peace: The Way of the Disciples* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1985), 152.

about community; it concerns something far richer, i.e. “people living with each other.”⁹⁹⁶

The solidarity of the Israelites develops from the fact that they believe themselves to be the chosen people of God, and the Old Testament gives expression to the fact that to love one’s neighbour as oneself is the way in which one experienced such solidarity. This emphasis on solidarity is taken up and addressed by Jesus in His public ministry, but His is a new and unique mode of solidarity.

In the Gospels, the evangelists portray Jesus as being extremely critical of the communities of His time, especially the exclusive solidarity which they embodied. Jesus called not simply for solidarity amongst the Israelites, but for an experience of solidarity with humankind.⁹⁹⁷ This is amply clarified by Luke when he describes Jesus’ condemnation of the selfish and exclusive solidarity embodied by the people of God, “[D]o good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly (Lk 6:27-28)...If you love those who love you what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them (Lk 6:32). This basic attitude of solidarity with humankind is integral to Jesus’ message of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus proclaims and emphasises that the solidarity of the Kingdom of God is characterised by love and that this love is non-exclusive. Such a view was radical and revolutionary in Jesus’ time. In fact, the entire public ministry of Jesus depicts Him as a sign of contradiction; His ministry is in total opposition to the Jewish motif of community current in His time. Throughout His earthly life “Jesus does not conform; He is critical of the religion of His contemporaries; He opposed legalism; He ignored the threshold between the sacred and the secular; He brought liturgy into life; He unmasked much of what was masquerading as good in political and religious structures and He opposed everything that diminished or threatened

⁹⁹⁶ Bredin, *Disturbing the Peace: The Way of the Disciples*, 155.

⁹⁹⁷ Albert Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity: The Gospel of Liberation* (Great Britain: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 1986), 61.

life, or contributed to death.”⁹⁹⁸This uniqueness characterised Jesus’ public ministry, especially the message which He proclaimed.

Here, the categories of *liminality* and *communitas* are indispensable to an understanding of Jesus’ earthly ministry and the centrality of the community.⁹⁹⁹ Jesus’ condemnation of the Jewish community structures caused a separation to emerge between Him and the existent structures. To become a follower of Jesus, one had to separate oneself from the existent Jewish community structures. This is because the mode of solidarity being proclaimed by Jesus was not compatible with that being practised by the Jewish community in His time. However, in making the transition, Jesus’ followers were being tested: they were brought to the threshold, to the *limen* of reality. This liminal stage is evoked by the radical and revolutionary teachings of Jesus. The ‘Good-News’ brought by Jesus, requires that those who follow Him detach from the everyday structures with which they are most comfortable. The result is a dissolution of all pretensions: Jesus’ followers are ‘betwixt and between’ what has been and what will be.¹⁰⁰⁰

This liminal stage acts as a transitional period through which the followers of Jesus are incorporated into a new life, a new world view. Jesus’ public life calls for such a response. Consequently, His followers lived in a state of tension: by encountering Jesus’ radical and revolutionary teachings their lived reality was being directly addressed and affected, but the fullness and extraordinary richness of this reality would only come to be revealed in the Easter events. Hence, Jesus’ public life has at its centre, a tension between the historical ‘already’ and the eschatological ‘not yet’. It is within this context that Jesus emphasises the living together of persons under the motif of love. His preaching of the reign of God extends

⁹⁹⁸ Bredin, *Disturbing the Peace: The Way of the Disciples*, 152.

⁹⁹⁹ See especially, Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago, Illinois: Adline Publishing Company, 1995), 94.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Bredin, *Disturbing the Peace: The Way of the Disciples*, 154-55. See also; Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, 95-96.

to all humankind regardless of their position in society, “it is for the rich and poor, the elite and exiled, the masters and the marginals.”¹⁰⁰¹ Jesus’ public life strove to bring all people into loving relationship, into harmonious co-existence. This is the liminal world of the Kingdom of God, a world into which Jesus, throughout His public life, invites His followers.

Luke Timothy Johnson, in the previous chapter, makes clear that there is also an important community dimension to the appearances of the risen Jesus. In the Gospel narratives, the risen Jesus appears repeatedly within a community context, where two or three of His disciples are gathered (Mt 28:9-10, 11-15; Mk 16:12-13, 14-15; Lk 24:13-33, 36-43, 50-52; Jn 20:19-29, 21:1-15). The disciples experience the totally Other in the risen Christ, an ultimate disclosure of the Kingdom of God within a community setting. It is within this communal context that the disciples come to recognise the presence of the risen Christ in their midst. Here, one finds the risen Jesus self-disclosing the reality of the Kingdom of God to His community, as He did throughout His public ministry, but now in a most unique and profound manner. The disciples’ experiences of the risen Christ causes them to feel those same feelings that they experienced as a community when reflecting on the message of the Kingdom throughout Jesus’ earthly ministry. Now, however, their experiences and feelings are of an utmost incalculable level. The disciples’ encounters with the risen Jesus present a manner of recognition that can only occur within the community of believers and, at one and the same time, their encounters were establishing and sustaining the community itself. Therefore, while the centrality of the community and its non-exclusivity presents itself as an integral dimension of Jesus’ public life and His resurrection appearances, it also emerges as being an important aspect of the early Christian community.

When one observes the early Christian community, it becomes apparent that these early followers continue to extend His loving invitation to the whole of humankind. In Acts, one

¹⁰⁰¹ Bredin, *Distributing the Peace: The Way of the Disciples*, 157.

discovers that while the disciples extend this invitation first to the Jews, the call is not limited to them. Rather, it was also extended to the Gentiles who were the outcasts of Jewish society (Acts 13:1-51). Living life in community is at the centre of early Christian's new life in Christ. It is the physical manifestation of the continuing life of the risen Jesus in His absence. It is clear from the writings of both Acts and St Paul's letters, that sustaining this life of loving co-existence with other persons is of central importance to the life of the early Church. It is also evident that the new way of life of Jesus' followers centres upon Jesus' earthly ministry and what has come to be revealed in the Easter events (Acts 2:14-47 ; 4:32-35; Rom 12:14-20). For the early Christians, it is essential that the inclusivity of persons, which was emphasised by Jesus throughout His public life, be maintained as to insure that no person ever comes to be neglected within the community (Acts 4:32-35).

The tension found throughout Jesus' public life is also evident within the dynamics of the post-Easter community, where one finds that Jesus' followers are living in a tension between the historical 'already' and the eschatological 'not yet'. Paul, in 1 Cor 15:1-34, reaffirms the fact of Jesus' resurrection and the future resurrection of believers, and makes clear that this tension is a present and pressing reality for the early Christian community. While Jesus' early followers express their faith through the dynamics of the Christian community, the incorporation into their new life in Christ is marked by ritual, in particular, by the symbolic action of a community fellowship meal. Most importantly, such meals acted as a point of encounter between the community and the risen Christ. In these meals, the early followers continue to experience together as a community the mystery of the risen Jesus, and through the actions of a shared meal continue to recognise that the risen Christ is personally present in their midst.

[2] *Table-fellowship*

Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry He did not "simply speak of love or compassion or forgiveness or good news."¹⁰⁰² Rather, He takes His message and translates it into a way of life that is "absolutely consistent with His preaching thus confronting His contemporaries inescapably with the implications of His message."¹⁰⁰³ This translation emerges most clearly when one observes the symbolic actions that Jesus used so as to extend His consciousness of the constant presence of the Father's boundless love for humankind. Throughout His earthly life, Jesus can only use His bodily presence to mediate the constant presence of the Father's boundless love and the New Testament accounts make clear that extraordinary things happen in His presence.¹⁰⁰⁴ In His public ministry, Jesus mediated the Father's presence to His followers through table-fellowship. In the Gospels, Jesus is consistently portrayed at table and references to such meal activity are prominent in His parables and teaching.

The uniqueness of Jesus' meal ministry emerges when one considers what meals signified for the Romans and Greeks at the time of His public ministry. In this context, the shared meal signified something far greater than mere nutrition and hydration. Through the action of eating and drinking together, participants were bound "to one another by quasi-kinship ties and mutual obligation."¹⁰⁰⁵ Likewise, "among Jewish sectarians, meals bore special meanings as identification rituals and statements of eschatological longing."¹⁰⁰⁶ However, both the Greco-Roman and the Jewish meal patterns would come to be "confirmed, contested, transformed, and re-interpreted by the meal patterns of Jesus of Nazareth."¹⁰⁰⁷ In the New

¹⁰⁰² Bredin, *Distributing the Peace: The Way of the Disciples*, 133.

¹⁰⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁵ Fr Jan Michael Joncas, "Tasting the Reign of God: The Meal Ministry of Jesus and Its Implications for Christian Worship and Life" (paper presented at the Joseph and Edith Habiger Endowment For Catholic Studies, Minnesota, 2010), 16.

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Testament accounts, the evangelists repeatedly describe how Jesus violates the strictures that Jewish culture had established concerning who one could and could not eat and drink with throughout His public ministry.¹⁰⁰⁸

The meal patterns of the Jewish tradition at the time of Jesus' public ministry only permitted the sharing of meals with members of other Jewish movements, and even so, many of those "sectarians would have preferred to starve rather than to grace the table of the *common rabble*."¹⁰⁰⁹ From this standpoint, the New Testament portrait of Jesus' table companions brings an important dimension concerning the reach of Jesus' ministry to the surface. Firstly, what is striking about the evangelists' depiction of Jesus' table-fellowship is that He is rarely ever mentioned as dining with His blood kin. Mark 3:31-35 (Mt 12:46-50; Lk 8:19-21) suggests that through His table-fellowship, Jesus actually replaces the commensality constituted by blood relationships with a "new table bond between Himself and His disciples, forged by a mutual commitment to the Reign of God as reveal in His person and preaching."¹⁰¹⁰

In the scriptures one finds Jesus at table with the Pharisee's (Lk 7:36-50), He dines with the *am ha-aretz*, four of which are His disciples (Peter, Andrew, James and John), then at the house of Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10), one even reads of Jesus dining at Levi's house (Mt 9:10-11; Lk 5:29-32) where He establishes commensal bonds with 'tax collectors and sinners'.¹⁰¹¹ Nathan Mitchel gives a rather perceptive summary of the New Testament portrait of Jesus table-fellowship:

¹⁰⁰⁸ Joncas, "Tasting the Reign of God: The Meal Ministry of Jesus and Its Implications for Christian Worship and Life," 18.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid., 18-19.

¹⁰¹¹ Ibid., 19.

[H]e sat at table not as the charming, congenial, ringleted centerpiece of a Rembrandt painting, but as a vulnerable vagrant willing to share potluck with a household of strangers. Normally, a table's prime function is to establish social ranking and hierarchy (by what one eats, how one eats, with whom one eats). Normally, a meal is about social identification, status and power.... But the very randomness of Jesus' table habits challenged this system of social relations modelled on meals and manners. It wasn't simply that Jesus ate with objectionable persons—outcasts and sinners—but that he ate with anyone, indiscriminately! Hence his reputation: He has no honor! He has no shame! For Jesus, healing (the gift he brings to a home) calls forth hospitality (those healed offer refreshment, food and drink, a place at the table). The table companionship practiced by Jesus thus recreated the world, redrew all of society's maps and flow charts. Instead of symbolizing social rank and order, it blurred the distinctions between hosts and guests, need and plenty. Instead of reinforcing rules of etiquette, it subverted them, making the last first and the first last.¹⁰¹²

Yet, in contrast to the promiscuous table fellowship practised by Jesus 'the prophet' in His public ministry, "Jesus 'the Christ', on the night before He died, shared a meal with a more restricted group"¹⁰¹³ of people.

Jan Michael Joncas states that because it is not immediately clear whether the Last Supper was in fact a Passover Seder (as recounting in Mt 26:17-19; Mk 14:12-16; Lk 27:7-13) or a meal anticipatory of the Passover (as recounted in Jn 13:1; 18:14), it is impossible to determine how many were in fact present.¹⁰¹⁴ The traditional interpretation for Christians has been that Jesus shared this meal with the Twelve, who were some of His closest disciples,

¹⁰¹² Mitchell, *Real Presence: The Work of the Eucharist*, 89-90.

¹⁰¹³ Joncas, "Tasting the Reign of God: The Meal Ministry of Jesus and Its Implications for Christian Worship and Life," 21.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ibid.

and that the Twelve symbolically constitute the new Israel.¹⁰¹⁵ While the table-fellowship practised by Jesus is integral to His earthly ministry, it is also an important dimension of the disciples' encounters with the risen Christ.

In the previous chapter, one observed that both N.T. Wright and Sandra Schneiders, in their considerations of the Easter appearances, emphasize the centrality of fellowship meals to the disciples' encounters with the risen Christ. For example, in the Emmaus narrative the disciples come to recognize the presence of the risen Christ in their midst through Jesus' action of 'breaking the Bread' (Lk 24:30-32). Likewise, in the Johannine narratives one finds that the disciples' fellowship meals accentuate the innate capacity that symbols have to mediate the mystery of the risen Christ. For instance, John 21 describes the way in which the disciples come to experience and recognize the risen Christ's presence in their midst on the shore of Tiberias through the symbolic action of a shared meal. The disciples shared many meals akin to this with Jesus throughout His public ministry (cf Mk 2:15-17). Thus, it is clear that the appearances of the risen Christ present and pronounce integral characteristics of Jesus' earthly ministry, so pronounced in fact that the disciples come to recognize that this is the same Jesus whom they are encountering, the one whom had been crucified, but who is now utterly transformed through His resurrection. They experience and recognize Him now in a totally new and more profound way than before the Easter events. This new mode of encounter, through the action of a fellowship meal, also presents itself as being an important aspect of the early Christian community. In the symbolic action of a meal, the community of believers continue to experience and recognize the risen Christ's presence in their midst. Such meals continued to establish the community of believers, and sustain their mission, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰¹⁵ Joncas, "Tasting the Reign of God: The Meal Ministry of Jesus and Its Implications for Christian Worship and Life," 21.

It is clear that the Kingdom table-fellowship of Jesus was continued by the early Christian community. It has been mentioned earlier that the early followers of Christ marked the incorporation of their new way of life with the celebration of a communal meal. In fact, the early Christian community carried forward both the meal patterns of Jesus ‘the prophet’ and Jesus ‘the Christ’. The fellowship meals of Jesus ‘the prophet’ were referred to as an agape. While it is unclear who attended these celebrations, they appear to be a “celebration of Christian *koinonia* wider in range than that of the formal Eucharist.”¹⁰¹⁶ The fellowship meals of Jesus ‘the Christ’ were referred to as a *eucharistia*. These meals were of deeper significance to the early followers and only the baptised could participate in these celebratory thanksgivings. Such *eucharistia* celebrations were sacramental evocations of the “Lord’s *continued presence* in the midst of His followers as they shared common eating and drinking in His Spirit.”¹⁰¹⁷

Within an incredibly short period of time, however, both meal patterns that of Jesus ‘the prophet’ and Jesus ‘the Christ’ came to be incorporated into one celebration. Here, the early Christian community came together to celebrate and proclaim the mystery revealed in Christ and to experience His intimate presence in their midst. Such meals emulate the actions of Jesus throughout His public ministry, but also re-actualise those same actions through which the risen Christ was made profoundly present in their midst within those initial encounters with Him after His death and resurrection.

[3] *Reflection and Proclamation of the Scriptures*

Proclaiming the *Good News* is perhaps the most prominent aspect of Jesus’ earthly ministry. All the New Testament portraits of Jesus suggest that the proclamation of the message of the

¹⁰¹⁶ Joncas, "Tasting the Reign of God: The Meal Ministry of Jesus and Its Implications for Christian Worship and Life," 21.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid.

Kingdom of God is of central importance to His public ministry. While Jesus mediated this message through symbolic actions, namely, His table-fellowship with sinners, healings, and exorcisms, he also regularly proclaimed the message of the Kingdom in parables. Through the medium of parables Jesus mediated the profound message of the Kingdom by means of metaphorical language:¹⁰¹⁸ “Jesus set out to proclaim the Father’s kingly rule as good news in word and action,”¹⁰¹⁹ and, as Walter Kasper observed, “[W]hat Jesus proclaimed, that He also lived.”¹⁰²⁰

In the New Testament portrayal of Jesus’ public ministry, one finds that Jesus is continuously depicted as preaching the message of the Kingdom of God to all who would give witness to His words and actions. Jesus strove throughout His entire earthly life to deliver the liberating message of God’s boundless love for His creation to all humankind. He brought the message of divine compassion and liberation to all people regardless of social status, wealth or intelligence. He was conscious that “God is a compassionate Father whose heart goes out to His children and that His compassion is for all of them.” This is *the* characteristic of Jesus’ message and ministry,¹⁰²¹ its uniqueness that confronts all preconceptions about the world and our way of life. In the Old Testament, one is told that Yahweh moves towards His creatures with compassion, the Gospels repeatedly speak of Jesus being “moved with pity” for the leper (Mk 1:41), that “He saw a great throng and he had compassion on them” (Mk 6:34), and He had “compassion on the crowd because they have nothing to eat (Mk 8:2).” In proclaiming the message of compassion and mercy Jesus enters into the fears and the pain, the tears and the worries and the anxieties of people so as to transform them by His words and actions.

¹⁰¹⁸ John Fuellenbach, *The Kingdom of God: The Message of Jesus Today* (New York: Orbis Books, 1998), 70-72.

¹⁰¹⁹ Bredin, *Disturbing the Peace: The Way of the Disciples*, 117.

¹⁰²⁰ Walter Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*, trans. William Madges (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 67.

¹⁰²¹ Bredin, *Disturbing the Peace: The Way of the Disciples*, 117.

In the Gospels, one finds Jesus continuously preaching to the poor and the sinners. The evangelisation of the poor is central to His message of compassion and liberation (Mt 11:5). Thus, the New Testament makes clear that Jesus' proclamation of the message involves both word and action. Furthermore, reflection on and proclamation of the scriptures are also integral aspects of disciples' encounters with the risen Christ.

In Chapter Five, N.T. Wright emphasises the centrality of the scriptures to the disciples' recognition of the risen Jesus present in their midst. For example, in the Emmaus narrative Luke describes how the disciples come to recognise the risen Jesus in the breaking of the bread but also through their reflection on the scriptures. When the risen Jesus vanishes from their sight, the disciples say to one another "[D]id our hearts not burn within us as He talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?" (Lk 24:32). The risen Christ became emphatically present to them and allowed them to recognise His presence through the action of contemplating the scriptures and the breaking of the bread. The disciples' encounters with the risen Jesus make clear that the Jesus they are experiencing now is the same Jesus who, in His earthly ministry, proclaimed the message of the Kingdom, and that it is the same Jesus who still proclaims the message of the Kingdom to them now in His resurrected state.

Following their encounters, the disciples were able to recognise that the telos of Jesus' life was consistent with the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. Yet, this was only possible because the risen Jesus had come to disclose Himself to them through their encounters with Him. Hence, the appearances of the risen Christ present themselves as being an integral part of the disciple's recognition process and the way in which they interpret the scriptures. The Easter events made the disciples acutely aware of the risen Christ's presence in the action of reflecting and proclaiming the scriptures, to such an extent, that the disciples emphasise that when they proclaim the message of the Kingdom it is really the risen Christ

who proclaims it. The centrality of the scriptures is also an integral dimension of the early Christian's way of life and to their continuing experience of the risen Jesus.

In the scriptures, one finds Jesus' early followers proclaiming the mystery revealed in Him, the Word made flesh, to all who will listen, to all who will hear. The scriptures are essential to the disciples' understanding and proclamation of Jesus as 'Lord'. As already mentioned, it was only after the disciples had reflected on the public life of Jesus and their Easter experiences through the lens of scripture that they came to truly understand the words proclaimed by Jesus after He had preached from the book of the prophet Isaiah in synagogue: "[T]oday this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing (Lk 4:16-21)." The early followers continued to spread the message of compassion and liberation proclaimed by Jesus in His earthly ministry but with a revitalised and transformed understanding of His message of mercy because through His resurrection Jesus had fulfilled all that had been prophesied in the scriptures.¹⁰²² Evangelisation was integral to the early community's way of life, they followed Jesus' living example. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit the early followers brought the 'good news' to the marginalised, the poor, the sinners and to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-51).¹⁰²³

Similar to Jesus' evangelisation which involved both word and action, the evangelisation carried out by His early followers was also accompanied by miracles and healings. These were signs of the Holy Spirit at work, of Christ's continued presence amidst the community of believers, including the poor and the sinners. Through the early followers' proclamation of the scriptures the risen Christ continues to transform people in His presence by the power of the Spirit experienced by those who were open to the 'good news.'

¹⁰²² Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*, 102.

¹⁰²³ *Ibid.*, 148.

[4] *Reconciliation and Forgiveness of Sins*

In the New Testament's portrayal of Jesus' earthly ministry, it is clear that a central aspect of the message of the Kingdom was the reconciliation and forgiveness of sin. In the Gospels, one finds that Jesus' earthly ministry involved a pronouncement of the forgiveness of sins, usually accompanied by an act of healing, as in the case of the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12). The forgiveness of sin is inseparable from the message of compassion and liberation which He proclaimed. Even on the Cross, one finds Jesus praying for the forgiveness of His enemies (Lk 23:24); He always encouraged His followers to forgive one another and connected this to the forgiveness that they themselves might expect from God, as in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 7:12). Jesus spoke of the need to be reconciled with one's neighbour before bringing a gift to the altar (Mt 5:23). His power to forgive is boundless, demanded not seven times, but seventy times (Mt 18:22).¹⁰²⁴

Paul emphasises the centrality of Jesus' power of forgiveness by referring to Christian ministry as the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18-19), a ministry given by Christ Himself.¹⁰²⁵ In Jesus' earthly ministry the forgiveness of sins was intimately connected with His table-fellowship with sinners, "[T]his man, they said, *entertains* sinners and *feasts* with them (Lk 15:2);" "[W]hen He was *reclining* [at dinner] in his house, a number of tax collectors and sinners were *reclining* with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many there among his followers (Mk 2:15)." Albert Nolan suggests that it is "impossible to overestimate the impact these meal must have had upon the poor and the sinners."¹⁰²⁶ Throughout Jesus' public ministry He accepted the poor and the sinners, taking away their shame and guilt by showing them that they mattered to Him. Jesus' forgiveness is central to His message of compassion: He is moved by compassion for humankind and reaches out to make contact

¹⁰²⁴ Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, 90.

¹⁰²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰²⁶ Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity: The Gospel of Liberation*, 39.

with the poor and the sinners. Jesus' public life makes clear that forgiveness and faith are intimately connected. For instance, in the story of the sinful woman who washes Jesus' feet, He says to her "[Y]our sins are forgiven...*Your faith* has saved you; go in peace (Lk 7:48-50)." Here, one finds that it is the woman's faith which has enabled God's forgiveness to be effective in her.

The extension of forgiveness and reconciliation is also an important feature of the Easter encounters with the risen Jesus. The risen Christ's act of self-disclosure itself reveals that the risen Christ continues to extend His love and compassion to the poor and to sinners. Through His resurrection, Jesus did not abandon humankind but rather shows His boundless love for humankind in a far more profound and pronounced manner than previously shown before the Easter events. Schillebeeckx suggests that in the Easter appearances the risen Christ came to the disciples as the light of the world and that this was the 'illumination' by which they came to be 'justified'.¹⁰²⁷ For Schillebeeckx, on Easter morning the disciples overwhelmed by guilt having run away and disappointed Jesus, experienced the joyful sense of the continued presence of risen Christ and the forgiveness of God.¹⁰²⁸ This 'conversion' through the disciples new experience of grace characterised by a sense of the risen Christ's presence and the forgiveness of God, accentuates the fact that Christ's self-disclosure, especially to Peter, presents itself as an act of compassion and an extension of forgiveness and reconciliation to humankind.¹⁰²⁹ The extension of reconciliation and the forgiveness of sins is also an important aspect of the early Christian community's way of life.

The scriptures announce that Christ committed the ministry of forgiveness to His disciples, on the evening of Easter Day Jesus states that "[I]f you forgive the sins of any, they are

¹⁰²⁷ Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, trans. Huber Hoskins (New York: Crossroad, 1979), 384.

¹⁰²⁸ *Ibid.*, 380-97.

¹⁰²⁹ Here, it must be noted that Schillebeeckx's perspective fails to account for the emergence of belief in the resurrection itself. See especially, Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 3, 701-04.

forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained (Jn 20:23).” The early Christian community preached the forgiveness and reconciliation of all sin in the risen Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. One observes that the early disciples’ preaching of the Good News was accompanied by acts of the Spirit, which included the forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness of sins was preached in the name of the risen Jesus, “[M]y brothers, I want you to realise that it is through Him that forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you (Acts 13:38).”

The mystery being proclaimed by the early Christian community also demanded the repentance of sin. For example, in the story of the first conversions one finds the people asking the disciples what it is they must do to receive the Father’s forgiveness: the disciples reply by saying “[Y]ou must repent, and every one of you must be baptised for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-39).” Hence, it is clear that the early Christian community place Jesus’ message of compassion and the forgiveness of sins at the centre of their evangelisation. The disciples were commissioned by the risen Lord to bring this message to the people through word and action, just as He had done throughout His earthly ministry.

[5] *Mission*

Finally, the Gospels make clear to us that Jesus’ commissioning of persons to proclaim the message of the Kingdom is a significant aspect of His public ministry. In the New Testament portrayal of Jesus’ earthly ministry, it is clear that there is an intimate link between encountering the mystery revealed in Jesus and responding to this revelation in proclamation. One reads of Jesus curing the man suffering from skin disease, to which the man responds by “freely proclaiming and telling the story everywhere (Mk 1:45).” Likewise, one finds Jesus commissioning the Twelve, “[H]e called the twelve together and gave them power and

authority over all devils and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal (Lk 9:1-2).” However, it is in the Easter events that Jesus’ commissioning of the disciples reaches its climax.

In the previous chapter, Schneiders emphasises the missionary dimension of the disciples’ Easter experiences. Through their encounters with the risen Christ, the disciples are sent forth by the glorified Jesus in mission. For instance, He commands them to “[G]o, therefore, make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19)”; “Go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all creation (Mk 16:15-16)”; “...you will receive the power of the Holy Spirit which will come on you, and you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to earth’s remotest end (Acts 1:8-9).” Jesus sends forth His disciples to continue His ministry in His name.

When one observes the early Christian community, it is clear that they are continuing the mission established by the risen Christ Himself. By the power of the Holy Spirit, their evangelisation is sustained. Likewise, the proclamation that Jesus is Lord is supported by the acts of the Spirit which accompanied the early community’s preaching. The risen Christ is emphatically present to the early Christian community and sustains their mission. The early community presents itself as the symbol of the risen Jesus’ emphatic presence now in His absence by following the example set forth by Jesus in His public ministry and by continuing His work, through Him and in His name. Hence, when the disciples heal, forgive and proclaim the scriptures, it is in fact the risen Christ who heals, forgives and proclaims the message of the Kingdom.

6.2. The Resurrection as the Dynamism of the Eucharistic Celebration

It is clear from the above that the five aspects which emerged from a consideration of the resurrection are not only integral aspects of the disciples’ encounters with the risen Christ,

but are also key dimensions of Jesus' public ministry and the ministry of the early Christian community. Furthermore, when one brings these aspects together one finds that there is a concentration of these five dimensions in the Eucharist. The Eucharistic celebration gives these five aspects their fullest expression and by doing so, enables the faithful to recognise in faith that the risen Christ is personally present in their midst, bringing them into intimate contact with Him.

[1] *The Presence of the Risen Christ in the Gathered Assembly*

Chapter Three gives an account of how the Eucharist makes the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist. The Eucharistic celebration expresses in the deepest sense what it is to be *ecclesia*. It is the Church's most central liturgical action in which Jesus' promise reaches its ultimate manifestation "[W]here two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst (Mt 18:20)." In His public life Jesus gathered people together and invited them to table; in His state of resurrection He disclosed Himself to the disciples when they were together at table. Now the ecclesial community gathers to celebrate the Eucharist as Christ's mystical body and proclaims its Easter faith. The risen Christ is made personally present in our midst through the unified symbolic action of the banquet which is a memorial sacrifice. Here, the risen Christ is present and encountered in profound manner amidst the gathered assembly.¹⁰³⁰

In His presence, and through the Eucharistic action itself, the Church discovers what it means to be a community. Likewise, the ecclesial community itself is sustained by the Eucharistic action which brings those gathered into intimate contact with the risen Christ. From our consideration of the Easter events in Chapter Five, it is clear that this making and sustaining of the ecclesial community through the Eucharistic action is amplified and enriched by those

¹⁰³⁰ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 27.

initial Easter encounters between the risen Christ and His disciples. The ecclesial community, gathered in worship, is the physical manifestation of His presence in His absence. In the Eucharist His presence amidst the gather assembly is not static. Rather, the risen Christ actively reaches out in compassion to His Church, nourishing the faithful with His transforming living presence.

[2] *The Presence of the Risen Christ and the Extension of the Forgiveness of Sins*

Gathered as a community to celebrate the Eucharist, the risen Christ present in our midst continues to extend His compassion and boundless love for humankind. The Gospels make clear that extraordinary things happen to people in Jesus' presence, that people were utterly transformed by His bodily presence. Now, in His unique mode of presence mediated through symbol, the risen Christ continues to transform the ecclesial community by the power of the Spirit in mystery. With the risen Christ present in our midst the Church offers sacrifice to the Father and asks Him, through the Lord's Prayer, to deliver His community from the power of evil.¹⁰³¹ Just as the early Christian community continued to extend forgiveness of sins in Christ's name, through the Church's singular Eucharistic action the risen Christ continues to extend reconciliation and the forgiveness of sins by the power of the Spirit. In the Eucharist the risen Christ discloses Himself to those gathered, His personal presence is an act of compassion and mercy. Just as the sinful woman who washed the feet of Jesus was saved by her faith (Lk 7:48-50), in the Eucharistic celebration the community of believers are reconciled with the Father and transformed by the presence of the risen Christ in faith. It must be said that His presence in our midst, in a way, speaks only to faith.

¹⁰³¹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 81.

[3] *The Presence of the Risen Christ and Reflection on the Scriptures*

In the Eucharistic celebration the mystical body of Christ proclaims its Easter faith. In the Eucharist, when the scriptures are read within the ecclesial community, it is the risen Christ who proclaims them. Through the communal action of proclaiming and reflecting on the scriptures, one comes to recognise the risen Christ's presence. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* makes this clear "[W]hen the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God Himself speaks to His people, and Christ, present in His word, proclaims the Gospel."¹⁰³² Just as the two disciples on the road to Emmaus experienced the risen Christ through His explanation of the word, "[D]id our hearts not burn within us as He talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?" (Lk 24:32), now in the Eucharistic celebration those gathered encounter the risen Christ's living presence through the proclamation of the scriptures. In His public ministry, Jesus gathered people to listen to His message of the Kingdom of God. In the Eucharist, He continues to do so through His Church. In the Eucharistic celebration, the risen Christ is encountered in mystery as He continues to disclose the inexhaustible mystery revealed in Him through His Word. Through the Eucharistic action of His mystical body, the risen Jesus continues to preach His message of the Kingdom of God in an even more profound way than in His earthly ministry. Thus, the ecclesial community's Eucharistic encounters with the risen Christ are real experiences of the Kingdom of God.

[4] *The Presence of the Risen Christ and the Breaking of the Bread*

In the Eucharist, the assembly gathers at table and enters into deep relationship with the glorified Christ in mystery through the re-actualisation of His table-fellowship. In the Easter narratives, the evangelists repeatedly describe how the risen Christ disclosed Himself to the disciples at table. In the Emmaus narrative, the disciples became conscious of His presence,

¹⁰³² *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 29.

they came to recognise Him through the action of the breaking the bread (Lk 24:30-32). In the Eucharist, the assembly gathers with the minister and breaks bread together in a way that amplifies those initial encounters with the glorified Christ. Hence, in the Eucharistic celebration, the risen Christ is present in the most profound manner under the Eucharistic signs of bread and wine.¹⁰³³ In the Eucharist, the creaturely elements of bread and wine are transformed by the power of the Spirit into the Body and Blood of the transfigured Christ.

The mystical body offers Herself with the transfigured Victim on the altar in loving sacrifice to the Father. In the Easter events, the Father revealed His acceptance of Christ's self offering on the Cross by raising Jesus from the dead. In the Eucharist, the Father reveals His acceptance of the Church's Eucharistic sacrifice by the gift of the Spirit, thereby unifying the ecclesial community with Christ and strengthening His mystical body. Through the re-actualisation of the Paschal Mystery, the ecclesial community encounter the risen Christ sacramentally in the most intimate manner and actively participate in the mystery of salvation. Thus, the Eucharistic celebration is best understood as a banquet which is a memorial sacrifice in which the Church recognises and encounters the risen Christ most intimately in the Eucharistic action of breaking the bread.¹⁰³⁴

[5] *The Presence of the Risen Christ and the Sending-Forth in Mission*

The Gospels show that in Jesus' earthly ministry those who experienced the mystery of Jesus' word and action responded in proclamation. In the Easter events, this missionary dimension reaches a climax: the disciples, upon encountering the risen Christ, are commanded by Him to "[G]o, therefore, make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19)"; "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all creation (Mk 16:15-16)." In the Eucharist, the risen Christ continues to commission His community of followers. In the Eucharist, the ecclesial

¹⁰³³ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 3.

¹⁰³⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 79f.

community encounters the risen Christ and are strengthened by His Spirit. Just as the early disciples were commissioned by Christ in their Easter encounters with Him, the ecclesial community, through its Eucharistic encounter with the risen Christ in mystery, are sent forth in mission to do good works in praise and blessing to God.¹⁰³⁵

It is obvious from this discussion the five aspects which emerged from a consideration of Jesus' resurrection find their fullest and richest expression in the whole Eucharistic action. They amplify the entire structure of the Eucharistic celebration, bringing to the fore the extraordinary spiritual richness of the ecclesial community's Eucharistic encounters with the risen Christ. It is apparent, therefore, that there is more to the Eucharist than just its sacrificial dimension and the *fact* of Christ's real presence in the sacred species. The Eucharist is a multi-dimensional singular action in which the presence of the risen Christ is intimately experienced: [1] in the gathered assembly; [2] in the extension of reconciliation and the forgiveness sins; [3] in the reading of the scriptures; [4] in the sacred species; [5] in the commissioning of His ecclesial community. Such an understanding of the Eucharist stands in sharp contrast to the rigid theologies reflected in the neo-scholastic manualist tradition regarding the Eucharist.

6.3. Addressing the Deficiency in Theologies of the Eucharist

The opening chapter of this thesis outlined a persisting deficiency in theologies of the Eucharist, particularly with regard to theologians' understanding of the risen Christ's presence in the Eucharist. It is argued that theologies of the Eucharist worked from a Christology that failed to engage with the whole Paschal Mystery. Such Christology understood Calvary only from the perspective of Christ's death, and His earthly ministry and His resurrection are passed over in total silence. Theologies of the Eucharist, which were shaped by classical Christology, fail to make clear that the risen Christ is not present as a

¹⁰³⁵ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n. 90 c.

mere object of faith. Such theology does not recognise that the presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist is a living personal presence and it also fails to appreciate the resurrection as an inexhaustible source of meaning for theological reflection on the Eucharist, especially with regard to His manifold presence. Theologians of the Eucharist, namely, Joseph Pohle and Maurice de la Taille, were preoccupied by the mystery of the incarnation and Christ's death. They emphasised the importance of rubrics and the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist, to such an extent, that the memorial dimension and the importance of what was being *done* in the Eucharist is scarcely mentioned. Luis Bermejo characterises the position of such theologians, when he says "...Christ is present under the twin symbols of bread and wine and that is, for all practical purposes, the end of the Eucharist."¹⁰³⁶ This thesis argues that it is imperative for theologians of the Eucharist to make explicitly clear that Calvary embraces both death *and* resurrection in an unbreakable unity. If this intrinsic relationship is not understood the entire redemptive process and the mystery being celebrated in the Eucharist is impoverished.

By developing their theologies of the Eucharist from the insights of classical Christology, theologians of the manualist tradition failed to place the whole Paschal Mystery at the centre of their treatises on the Eucharist. By failing to engage with Christ's resurrection, writers such as, Pohle and de la Taille, do not demonstrate that the entire Paschal Mystery is commemorated in the Eucharistic banquet and not merely His self-offering on the Cross. By working from a one-dimensional understanding of Calvary, the theology of traditional theologians such as, Pohle and de la Taille fails to develop a coherent understanding of the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist. They fail to convey that Christ did not remain in the confines of death. They do not make immediately clear that through His resurrection Jesus was utterly transformed and glorified, and therefore, His presence in the Eucharist is not

¹⁰³⁶ Bermejo, *Body Broken and Blood Shed: The Eucharist of the Risen Christ*, xii.

static but rather a real living personal presence now mediated through symbolic action. A one dimensional understanding of Calvary fails to understand that the risen Christ's presence in the Eucharist is a many-faceted reality.

The Eucharist is more verb than noun, more action than object. In the Eucharist, the ecclesial community gathers at table to actively proclaim its Easter faith. It is necessary to understand the Eucharist as an action because the Church's liturgical worship presents itself as the existential correlative to the proclamation that Jesus is Lord. The Eucharist is the immediate response to experiencing and accepting the mystery revealed in the risen Christ through the whole Paschal Mystery. Christ's self-disclosure, His compassionate extension of Himself to humankind, demands a response and this response manifests itself most fully in the Church's Eucharistic action. In the Eucharist the ecclesial community gathers at table in praise and thanksgiving to the Father. It is only through the entire mystical Eucharistic action that those who gather to celebrate the Eucharist come to recognise and experience the presence of the risen Christ in their midst. In the Eucharist, the risen Christ is made personally present sacramentally with His saving work. Those who have gathered at table to celebrate their Easter faith enter into deep relationship with the risen Christ and actively participate in the mystery of salvation in His presence. Such an understanding makes clear that the dynamism of the Eucharistic celebration finds its source and centre in the risen Christ and stands in sharp contrast to the neo-scholastic manualist tradition.

Earlier in this thesis, it has been shown that this rich vein of Eucharistic theology was initially opened in 1932 by Dom Odo Casel with his dynamic theology of the mystery of Christian worship. In his theology, Casel moved away from the rigid theologies of the manuals by reviving the sacramentology of the early Church Fathers. It was demonstrated that Casel understood the sacraments as mysteries, as something that is *done* by the Christian community. He emphasised that the risen Christ is present at the heart of His mystical body.

Casel also highlights that the Eucharist is best understood as a ritual *action*, one which makes the entire Paschal Mystery emphatically present to believers. In the Eucharist, Christians enter more deeply into the Christian mystery itself. However, Casel insists that the sacraments are not merely rites of passage. Rather, they accommodate the mystical encounter between the risen Christ and His mystical body. In the Eucharist, the Church encounters the risen Christ most intimately in mystery. In the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, the risen Christ is made personally present together with His saving work through the unified symbolic action of the Church manifested in worship. Casel emphasises that the ecclesial community through their Eucharistic encounters with the risen Christ experience the fullness and richness of the Paschal Mystery. The Christian faithful are utterly transformed by the presence of the risen Christ and through the whole Eucharistic action they are conformed to Him in mystery. Hence, the Eucharist is best understood as an action that is saturated by the mystery of the risen Christ's presence.

By reviving a theocentric approach to the Eucharist that centred on the whole Paschal Mystery, Casel brings the innate capacity that symbols possess to mediate the mystery of Christ to the surface. This revitalised appreciation of symbol allowed richer consideration to be given to the ecclesial dimension of Christian worship. It enabled theologians to communicate the fact that the risen Christ is present and active with His saving work in the Church, and that His presence is recognised and experienced most intimately in the mystical body's Eucharistic action. However, one observes that Casel's theology was merely the beginning: it acts as a stimulus for other eminent theologians to develop theologies of the Eucharist that engaged with the whole Paschal Mystery. Theologians such as Bouyer and Schillebeeckx refined and modified Casel's insights into a more coherent theology by incorporating within them their own rich insights which they developed from contemporary biblical scholarship and phenomenological anthropology. Unlike the writers of the manualist

tradition, Bouyer and Schillebeeckx did not centre their theology on the incarnation and Christ's death. Rather, their theologies were far more concerned with what is *done* in the liturgy. Their understanding was that the active presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist is a many-faceted reality and that His manifold presence saturates the whole of Christian worship in mystery.

In his encyclical letter, *Mediator Dei*, Pope Pius XII outlined that the risen Christ's presence in the Eucharist is multi-dimensional. However, the Pope failed to recognise that the risen Christ is also actively present in Eucharist through the reading of the scriptures. The encyclical presents a deficient theology of the Eucharist as Pius XII only speaks of the Eucharist in its relationship with Christ death. While he does speak of Christ's manifold presence in the Eucharist, Pius XII speaks only of the Eucharist as sacrifice. *Mediator Dei* passes over both the memorial dimension of the Eucharist and Christ's resurrection in total silence. It is imperative that theologians recognise that the Eucharist can only be appreciated as a banquet – which is a memorial sacrifice – when the whole Paschal Mystery is understood as being present and active in the Eucharist action. However, it must be noted that Pius XII did explain that the Eucharist is by its nature an action.

Following from this, Bouyer, in his dynamic theology of the Word, builds upon Casel's emphasis that the Eucharist is a unified symbolic action where the whole Paschal Mystery is made climactically present. Unlike *Mediator Dei*, Bouyer highlights that the risen Christ is personally present in the Eucharist through the action of proclaiming the scriptures. He stresses that the Christian Mystery is a fact; it is the perfect disclosure "through the self-revelation of God's own Word, of the divine wisdom unattainable to humankind."¹⁰³⁷ The Christian Mystery must be understood as being the supreme grace of God because it is the mystery which is the supreme revelation of divine wisdom. It is God's Word *par excellence*.

¹⁰³⁷ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 101.

The Christian Mystery is the Word of God in its one and entire fullness because it is Jesus Christ Himself. In reading the scriptures, the presence of the glorified Christ is recognised and experienced by the faithful. In the Eucharist, the ecclesial community hear God's Word in Christ, and those who have gathered at table experience in their own lives the power of that Word of God as exemplified in the Cross *and* His resurrection.

The risen Christ's presence in His word is a personal love that longs to communicate itself to humankind. This is the mystery that the faithful encounter in the Eucharist and it is the Word Himself that mediates it. Therefore, the Eucharistic celebration should be enriched and unified by a fuller understanding of the Word of God. The hearing of God's Word by God's People is integral to the recognition and experience of the risen Christ's presence in His mystical body. In the Eucharist when the scriptures are proclaimed, it is like the coming of that same Word in Christ to Israel in the fullness of time. The ecclesial community proclaims the scriptures and reflects on them in the Eucharistic celebration. By such action the risen Christ is made personally present in their midst. In the Eucharist the presence of risen Christ reaches out in compassion and love to His mystical body.

Traditional theologies of Eucharist present a deficient understanding of presence in that they fail to make the careful distinction between the mode of being peculiar to human beings and the objective 'being-there' particular to the objects of nature. By failing to make this distinction, such theologies of the Eucharist obscure the fact of encounter with God. Such an approach presents a one dimensional understanding of Christ's presence. It describes Christ's presence under the Eucharist signs of bread and wine in way that implies that He is present in a static mode akin to that of an object. Unlike such theologies of the Eucharist that were shaped by the insights of classical Christology, writers such as Bouyer and Schillebeeckx make clear that the risen Christ's presence in Eucharist is a dynamic, active and personal presence that is encountered in the various dimensions of the Eucharistic action. In the

Eucharist, the presence of the risen Christ is mediated by language, the symbolic language of ritual idiom. Yet, the presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist is an utterly mysterious presence one which cannot be exhausted by language and concepts. Rather the symbolic language of ritual mediates the risen Christ's presence and acts as the point of encounter between Him and His ecclesial community.

While Bouyer and Schillebeeckx present more dynamic theologies of the Eucharist compared to those reflected in the manualist tradition mainly because they took into account liturgical experience and the whole Paschal Mystery, it must be acknowledged that they do not allow the resurrection to fully shape their theologies of the Eucharist. However, their insights did have significant influence on Vatican II's theology of the Eucharist presented in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* which marked the acceptance of the centrality of the mystery in relation to understanding the Eucharist. The Council gave a richer consideration to the Paschal Mystery itself and emphasised the importance of the memorial dimension of the Eucharistic celebration. Following the liturgical reform inaugurated by Vatican II, theologians now have to address the question of presence in a new context. This thesis has shown that the philosophy of Martin Heidegger exerted significant influence on the theologians such as Jean-Luc Marion and Louis-Marie Chauvet who developed their theologies from the insights of phenomenology and who emphasised the importance of human experience to an understanding of one's encounters with the presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist.

It is imperative for theologians, when considering the mode of encounter with the risen Christ that they make clear, that one encounters His presence in the Eucharist in a way that speaks only to faith. It is an utterly mysterious presence mediated through symbols in His absence. This dynamic between presence and absence is integral to the disciples' Easter experiences and to the risen Christ's mode of presence in the Eucharist. The ecclesial community's

encounters with the risen Christ are saturated by the abyss of absence. By being receptive to the absence which permeates one's encounters with the risen Christ the uniqueness of the mystery of His presence finds its fullest expression. However, writers such as Marion and Chauvet fail to find a balance between the Christ's presence and absence. Marion fixates the fact of the risen Christ presence to such an extent that he passes over the abyss of absence which saturates Christ's presence. Likewise, Chauvet emphasises the absence of the risen Christ to such an extent, that he fails to make clear that the risen Christ is personally present in the Eucharist. Both of these writers argue that an understanding of the presence of Christ must be developed only from a theology that is non-metaphysical, that one must speak of God without Being.

Both Marion and Chauvet emphasise the Eucharist as gift and the fact that the presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist is mediated by symbol which brings together the past, present and future in one unified action. One of Marion's suggestions is that theologies of Christ's presence which developed from classical metaphysics lapse into 'everydayness' by considering His presence only within the present. However, such a view presents a mode of presence that is static and one dimensional, therefore, the importance of maintaining a poetic or iconic gaze in relation to His presence in the Eucharist is essential if the extraordinary richness of one's experiences of the risen Christ is to be recognised. Likewise, Chauvet is also particularly critical of scholastic theology concerning its dependency on causality. He refers to the sacramentology of Aquinas and his contemporaries as presenting a 'productionist scheme' which impoverishes the sacramental order. Similar to Schillebeeckx, Chauvet emphasises that the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is mediated by language. For Chauvet, this mediation is through the ritual action itself by means of symbolic exchange.

It must be acknowledged, however, that Chauvet misinterpreted the theology of Aquinas. While his insights concerning the abyss of absence which saturates the presence of the risen

Christ in the Eucharist and his understanding of symbolic exchange are essential to an understanding of the manner in which one encounters the risen Christ in the Eucharist, they do not necessitate a dismissal of the metaphysical approach of Aquinas. Rather, both Chauvet's and Marion's insights can be integrated and revitalise an onto-theological approach without diminishing the core significance of the insights that were raised by both writers. This was clearly shown by Herbert McCabe through his integration of both the insights of classical metaphysical and modern experiences of language and culture which presents a more comprehensive theology of the Eucharist, especially with regard to the mode of presence particular to the risen Christ. Furthermore, it must be recognised that the non-metaphysical approach of both Marion and Chauvet diminished the 'given-ness' of experience which reaches its climax in one's encounters with the risen Christ. The approach taken by Marion and Chauvet fails to recognise that Christ is the *cause* of His self-disclosure. The risen Christ reaches out to His mystical body in love and it is the task of the mystical body, the ecclesial community, to be open and receptive of His presence in their midst. This is an essential attribute to the manner in which the Church encounters the risen Christ.

When considering the Easter events, the above mentioned attribute emerges strongly in the context of the discussion concerning the evangelists' use of the verb *ōphthē*, best translated as "He appeared" rather than "was seen by." Hence, it must be acknowledged that there is an integral objective character to the presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist. While His presence demands a subjective response by means of interpretation, it is important to maintain the objective character of experience, which this author suggests can only be maintained within a theological framework which emphasises that while His presences is mediated through the language of symbol, it is the risen Christ Himself whom is the *cause* of His self-disclosure. From one's consideration of certain theologies of Eucharist that developed after Vatican II, it is clear that, theologians are struggling to maintain an apophatic

approach raised by theologians such as Casel, Bouyer and Schillebeeckx. Post-conciliar writers, such as Marion and Chauvet, have struggled to develop a theology Christ's presence in the Eucharist that maintains the dynamic between the fact that while the Christian Mystery is beyond the limits of human comprehension and linguistic abilities, at one and the same time, the Christian mystery is revealed to humankind through lived experience, that one actually encounters the mystery of Christ in the Eucharist. The relationship between absence and presence amplifies the fact that, through the Eucharistic action, humankind experiences the presence of the risen Christ in a totally *sui generis* manner in mystery. The Eucharist mediates the presence of the risen Christ in His absence. Yet, while one truly experiences the presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist, these Eucharistic encounters with the risen Christ possess a mystical dimension that defies all rational explanation and eradicates any purely subjective interpretation. Such a perspective only emerges when a more comprehensive consideration is given to Jesus' resurrection.

This thesis has shown that when theologians of the Eucharist allow Christ's resurrection to shape their theologies of the Eucharist in a more comprehensive way, an extraordinary richness emerges concerning the faithful's encounters with the risen Christ. By giving a broader consideration to those initial encounters between the risen Christ and His disciples following His death, the entire Eucharistic action is amplified and can be understood as a true experience of the kingdom of God breaking in on the world. It is in the Easter narratives that the entire dynamic of the Eucharistic action finds its source and centre. The Easter events emphasise the centrality of the ecclesial community, that the risen Christ's presence is mediated through symbol in His absence, that one's experience of His presence possesses both an objective and subjective character, and most importantly, that the risen Christ Himself with His saving work is personally present and active in the Church, and in her Eucharistic action. In the Eucharist, the mystery revealed in Christ is continued, His presence

is a living, active and personal presence that reaches out in compassion and love to all humankind. This is the dynamic of the Eucharist itself: it is a unified mystical symbolic action by which the whole Paschal Mystery is experienced. It is by this Eucharistic action that the faithful, who are gathered at table, come to recognise and encounter the presence of the risen Christ in their midst and through Him enter into deep relationship with God in mystery. Hence, in the Eucharistic action Jesus' promise reaches its climax, "[W]here two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). The presence of the glorified Christ is mediated by the entire Eucharistic action and is intimately experienced: [1] in the gathered assembly; [2] in the extension of reconciliation and the forgiveness sins; [3] in the reading of the scriptures; [4] in the sacred species; [5] in the commissioning of His ecclesial community. This is the dynamism of the Eucharistic action itself which finds its source and centre in the risen Christ.

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Appendix

The following abbreviations are used throughout this work:

Title	Abbreviation
<i>The Gospel of Matthew</i>	<i>Mt</i>
<i>The Gospel of Mark</i>	<i>Mk</i>
<i>The Gospel of Luke</i>	<i>Lk</i>
<i>The Gospel of John</i>	<i>Jn</i>
<i>Acts of the Apostles</i>	<i>Acts</i>
<i>Romans</i>	<i>Rm</i>
<i>1 Corinthians</i>	<i>1 Cor</i>
<i>2 Corinthians</i>	<i>2 Cor</i>
<i>Galatians</i>	<i>Gal</i>
<i>Ephesians</i>	<i>Eph</i>
<i>Philippians</i>	<i>Ph</i>
<i>Colossians</i>	<i>Col</i>
<i>1 Thessalonians</i>	<i>1 Thess</i>
<i>2 Thessalonians</i>	<i>2 Thess</i>
<i>1 Timothy</i>	<i>1 Tim</i>
<i>Titus</i>	<i>Tt</i>
<i>Philemon</i>	<i>Phm</i>
<i>James</i>	<i>Jm</i>
<i>1 Peter</i>	<i>1 Pet</i>
<i>2 Peter</i>	<i>2 Pet</i>

<i>1 John</i>	<i>1 Jn</i>
<i>Hebrews</i>	<i>Heb</i>
<i>The Revelation to John</i>	<i>Rev</i>
<i>Genesis</i>	<i>Gen</i>
<i>Exodus</i>	<i>Ex</i>
<i>Psalms</i>	<i>Ps</i>
<i>English Standard Version</i>	<i>ESV</i>
<i>Revised Standard Version</i>	<i>RSV</i>
The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>	<i>S.C</i>
The Encyclical Letter <i>Mediator Dei</i>	<i>M.D</i>
The Encyclical Letter <i>Mystici Corporis Christi</i>	<i>M.C.C</i>