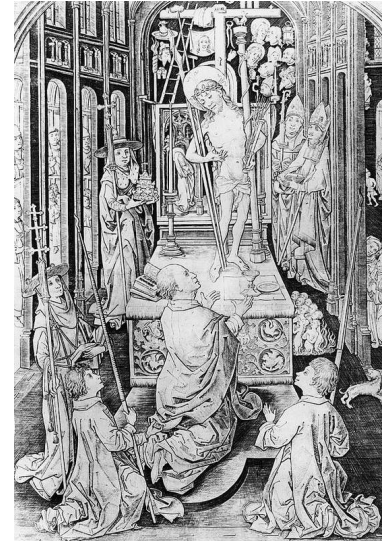


The Third “Ordinary” Eucharistic Miracle: Transubstantiation

I. **Recall from Previous Sessions...**

- a. Thomas Aquinas on the Definition of a Miracle
All Miracles: Events which Exceed the Efficient Causality of the Natural Order, Done by God
- b. Fr. Louis Bouyer, CO: Rite and Man
 - i. Humans Naturally Celebrate Ritual
 - ii. We Better Understand Christian Liturgy if We Study Human Ritual Across Many Traditions to Discover What Ritual is Presumed to Do
 - iii. However: Christian Liturgy is Unique, in that...
 1. Christian Liturgy is Founded on History, not Myth
 2. God Completes the Rituals as Humans Cannot
- c. “Ordinary” Eucharistic Miracles
 - i. God’s Intervention in the Natural Order for our Salvation
 - ii. Apologetic/Theological Value in Studying Human Ritual
 - iii. Previous Classes: Time Travel & of God Acting through Us



II. **Transubstantiation as the Doctrine of the Church: The Real Presence of the Body, Blood, Soul, & Divinity of Christ Under the Appearance of Bread and Wine**

- a. Trent (Second Canon on the Eucharist) & Paul VI (*Mysterium Fidei*, 46)
- b. Brett Salkeld on the Absurdities to which He Descended Defending Transubstantiation

III. **Foundational Natural Human Action: The Human Desire for Sacred Objects, and the Risk of Idolatry**

- a. The (Idolatrous) Desire for God’s Presence
 - i. Because Human Beings Experience the World through the Body, we Long to Experience God as a Material Object Present to Us Among a Other Material Objects
 - ii. We Can Never Reduce God to One Object Among Many Objects [Univocity of Being]
 - iii. Analogy of Being: God as the Primary Cause of All Being, Unlike All Other Beings
- b. Even the Jewish People Experienced the Temptation to Idolatry...
... but it could also be a deeply legitimate desire to see the face of God.

IV. **Brant Pitre: God Accommodates Himself to this Desire (*Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*)**

- a. The Jewish Tabernacle Contained Three Items...
The Ark of the Covenant * The Golden Lampstand * The Golden Table of the Bread of Presence
- b. A Heavenly Banquet: Moses, Aaron, and the Seventy Elders Feast with God
- c. The Golden Table with the Bread of Presence is a Memorial of Moses’ Heavenly Banquet
- d. The Weekly Consecration of the Bread of Presence to God on the Sabbath
 - i. Prior to being offered as sacrifice, the bread could be laid on a marble table;
 - ii. After being offered as sacrifice, the bread could only be laid on the golden table...
“... since what is holy must be raised [in honor] and not brought down.” –Mishnah Menahoth 11:7)
- e. In the Time of Jesus: The Thrice-Annual Public Display of the Bread of Presence
“They [the priests] used to lift it [the Golden Table] up at exhibit the Bread of the Presence on it to those who came up for the festivals, saying to them, ‘Behold, God’s love for you!’ (Babylonian Talmud, Menahoth 29A)
 - i. The Three Pilgrim Feasts Commanded by Exodus 34:23, 23:17: Passover, Pentecost, Booths
“three times a year so all your males see the face of the Lord, the Lord God of Israel.”
 - ii. Showing the Bread of Presence was a Way of Fulfilling the Command to See God’s Face
“it seems to me that the sages departed from convention and permitted the display of the temple furniture before the Pilgrim so as to allow them to fulfill their obligation ‘to see the face.’ or, to put it

another way, the presentation of these holy items before the large assembly created the experience of a public theophany. The Israelites who had longed for the temple courts and asked ‘when may I come and see the face of God,’ went up to the temple at the pilgrimage feast and gazed upon the vessels of the temple service that were brought out of hiding. In this way their spiritual thirst was slaked and they fulfilled the commandment of the Torah that ‘three times a year each male must see the face of the sovereign, the Lord, the God of Israel’” (Israel Knohl, quoted by Pitre, 132-3)

iii. The Bread of Presence was not the Actual Face of God, but a Sign of It

V. The Need for Metaphysics: Discussing Substance *Before* “Transubstantiation”

- a. Materialistic Reductionism: Claiming a Thing is Merely Its Observable Properties
- b. Reductionistic Accounts of Reality are Often Insulting, because Incomplete
- c. The “Something” that Lurks “Behind” the Properties of a Thing
 - i. Substance: The underlying reality of a thing, which gives it its definition & continuity
 - ii. Properties: Observable qualities possessed by the substance, essential or accidental
- d. Sacramental Metaphysics: Things “Express” Their Substantial Form through their Properties

“to the patristic mind, real presence was possible because under the sign was the deeper reality in which the sign sacramentally participated... underneath the accidents--the sign--exists the substance--this signified, the deeper reality mediated by the sign... [As Thomas writes,] ‘being is innermost in each thing and most fundamentally present within all things since it is formal in respect of everything found in a thing... hence it must be that God is in all things, and most inner mostly’” (cf. ST 1.8.1)
- e. A Thing [substance or subsisting thing] = Form [Substantial + Accidental] + Matter
 - i. Form is the definition or perfection of a thing
 - ii. Matter is the limiting principle of a thing [it is *here* instead of elsewhere]

VI. Liturgical Theology: Transubstantiation, Real Presence, and the Eucharist as Object that Isn’t

- a. ST III.75: Transubstantiation—How the Eucharist does/does not, follow the laws of nature
 - i. Art. 1: “no body can be in several places at the one time” (Art. 1: obj. 3); thus the Eucharist is a *sign* of Christ’s body; it is not his Glorified Body, but it also is not merely a sign. It is the “bodily presence” of Jesus Christ in the sign.
 - ii. Art. 2: The presence of a thing which was not previously present can happen...
 1. ... by change of place (local presence)
 2. ... by the conversion of what exists into that place into a new thingThe Eucharist is not effected by change of place, and so Christ is not locally present in the Eucharist & the Eucharist must be caused by conversion of bread & wine.
 - iii. Art. 4: How it Violates Laws of Metaphysics (The Miracle of Transubstantiation)
 1. Every change of a thing is either a change of substantial or accidental form
 2. BASIC RULE: Any time that substantial form changes, accidental forms also change; this makes sense, because the substantial form determines the defining act of a thing’s being; if a thing’s defining act of being changes, surely its accidents would also have to change.
 3. In the singular example of the Eucharist, the substantial form changes *with no corresponding change in the accidental form*.
 - iv. Art. 6: The Second Miracle of Transubstantiation, God allows the accidents of the bread and wine (their quantity, location, color/taste, etc.) to exist *without any substantial form*—the accidents of bread & wine become *self-subsisting accidents*.
 - v. A Third Miracle of Transubstantiation: When we consume the accidents of bread and wine, they *cease* being self-subsisting accidents individuated only by their quantitative matter and adhere to a new substance (specifically, us).
- b. Implications of the Fact that the Properties of the Eucharist are Properties of Bread & Wine

- i. The accidents do not become part of the Lord Jesus Christ...
...and Jesus Christ's accidental properties to not become present in the Eucharist
- ii. This Allows Us to Resolve the Awkward Questions!
"The language of substance and accident—or, more preferably, species/appearance in formal doctrinal teaching—allowed the Church to understand the real presence of Christ without falling into gross materialism or a figural symbolism that disallows adoration of the Blessed Sacrament... [D]o not think about this as a physical change. Remember the danger of a butcher-shop theology... the entire Christ is present in each species of the sacrament... Because the presence is substantial (rather than physical), when we receive the Blessed Sacrament, we are not receiving part of Christ. When the Body of Christ is broken at the fracture rite, there is no scream from the heavenly realm." –Timothy O'Malley, *Real Presence* (70 & 86)

VII. Summing Up the Options...

- a. The Eucharistic Presence could Be...
 - i. Merely Memorial: The Eucharist *is* just bread and wine, but prompts our memories
 - ii. Real: The Substance of Christ is Present in Eucharist
 1. Physically: The hypostatic union of substantial form to matter and its properties.
 2. Sacramentally: No formal union of substance of Christ & properties of bread/wine; accidental properties are signs pointing to Christ's substance [substantial presence].
- b. Should We Really *Not* Say "Physical Presence"?

"many people use ['physically present'] simply to mean 'bodily' present, or 'really, very, very' present. that is quite unobjectionable. The problem, however, is that using such a word, with no theological pedigree, can get one caught up in all the kinds of conceptual problems I had experienced and have since found all over the Internet. And using it simply to mean 'really, very, very' gives the impression that only the physical is really real, something completely at odds with the Christian worldview." (Selkald 31 n. 95)

VIII. Defending the Eucharist as Sacred Object: Undoing Decades of Sacramental Deconstruction

- a. Criticisms: "Back when people looked at the Eucharist instead of receiving it."
- b. The Ground of this Criticism: A Desire to Reduce Objects to their Components or Functions
"One of the recurring tropes of the past century is the notion that things must be replaced with actions, static poses with dynamic processes, nouns with verbs. From Bergson and James, through Whitehead and certain dynamicist readings of Heidegger, all the way up to more recent Deleuzian currents, 'becoming' is blessed as the permanent trump card of innovators, well 'being' is cursed as a sad-sack regression to the archaic philosophies of olden times" (Graham Harmon, *Immaterialism*, 51)
 - i. ... reduction of a thing to its effects on the world or actions in the world
 - ii. ... reduction other thing to its components or parts
- c. Responding to the Criticisms, with the Contemporary Immaterialist Retrieval of Aristotle
 - i. The Reduction of Objects to their Components or Functions is a Kind of Materialism
 - ii. But, Aristotle Says, Objects have Substance in their Own Right, Beyond What we Observe
 - iii. Focus on Function or Components is Anti-Body
"From here it is easy to see why we need the thing-in-itself as the reality that cannot be converted into either of the two basic forms of knowledge: what a thing is made of, [or] what a thing does. After all, any claim that a thing is convertible into knowledge cannot account for the obvious and permanent difference between a thing and knowledge of it... Things are simply not convertible into knowledge..." (Harmon, 28-29)
- d. Applied to the Eucharist: As an Object, the Eucharist...
 - i. ... cannot be reduced to its parts [Zwillingli]
 - ii. ... cannot be reduced to its function [Luther, Modern Catholic anti-devotionalism]
 - iii. ... has within its substance the possibility to develop or to take on a life of its own which maybe a surprise to us! (e.g., Eucharistic adoration, Eucharistic processions, etc.)
- e. This allows us to see the legitimacy of creativity in Eucharistic devotion outside of Mass.