

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

The Role of Faith in the  
Eucharistic Doctrine of  
Thomas Aquinas in the  
Summa Theologiae

A Thesis Submitted  
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
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By  
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## PREFACE

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## INTRODUCTION

In my thesis, I have examined the role of faith in the Eucharistic doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologiae (III, 73-83), in order to determine Thomas' perception of the nature and extent of the human dimension of the encounter with Christ in the sacrament. In accordance with Aquinas' own analysis, this examination of faith has proceeded along two main lines: (1) the portrayal of the role of faith in Thomas' exposition of his doctrine of real presence, which has principally involved the discussion of the function of faith in resolving the epistemological problem created, in part at least, by the subsistent accidents of the bread and wine; and (2) the account of Thomas' delineation of the role of faith in the Eucharist within the context of his theology of grace, which has emphasized the necessity of faith for the worthy reception not only of the grace offered to men in non-sacramental ways but, indeed, even of that grace which is consequent upon Christ's actual presence in this sacrament. I believe that this manner of analysis has allowed me to develop and describe the various affirmations made by Thomas about the role of faith in this part of his theology in a systematic

and comprehensive way.

My theme has been developed in four chapters. The three sections of the first chapter are devoted to the treatment of a number of introductory concerns, the proper understanding of which is necessary for a correct evaluation of the argument of the later chapters. In the first section, I have examined the place of faith in the appropriation of grace outside of the sacramental structure, principally as this is described by Thomas in his treatment of justification by faith in the Second Part of the Summa (I-II, 106ff.). Then, I have tried to demonstrate the continued need for faith even in the reception of sacramental grace by recounting Thomas' discussion of the role of faith in relation to the sacraments of the Old and of the New Law (in his analysis of the sacraments in general in III, 60ff.). Finally, in anticipation of the later argument about the Eucharist in particular, I have ended the first chapter with a brief description of Thomas' specific contention about the necessity of faith for the reception of the grace offered through the Eucharist itself.

Chapter two concentrates on Aquinas' account of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and is divided into three main sections. The first section has tried to identify briefly the problem of real presence as formulated in the tradition before St. Thomas. The second section has

analyzed his account of the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, in three parts. Since Thomas explains his doctrine of real presence in terms of his understanding of substance and describes it as being the result of a process of change, it has been necessary (a) to provide a short summary of these concepts (substance and accidents, and, change in general) as employed elsewhere in Thomas' thought. But, because Thomas both departs in some respects from his usual portrayal of substance and accidents in his teaching on the Eucharist, and, moreover, emphasizes the uniqueness of this miraculous conversion, in the explication of real presence according to Thomas, (b) sufficient care has been taken to underscore specifically the unique aspects of Thomas' argument. In turn, the emphasis on distinctiveness has forced me (c) to examine the principal cause of the Eucharistic conversion, the act of God in fulfilling the promise of Christ. Finally, the discussion in Chapter two has been concluded with the examination of the two ways in which faith contributes to the exposition of the doctrine of real presence: (a) the role of faith in the resolution of the epistemological problem posed by Thomas' notion of substantial conversion, and the concomitant idea of subsistent accidents, has been noted; and (b) against the background of his discussion of sacramental causality, I have described the secondary role, in the achievement of the

conversion, of the so-called "faith of the Church," which is expressed in the intention of the minister to consecrate the species.

In the five sections of the third chapter, I have turned to the detailed discussion of the role of faith in the reception of the grace bestowed as the result of real presence. In the first section I have briefly sketched the effects of worthy reception of the Eucharist, the infusion of justifying grace and charity, and, the actual enjoyment of 'spiritual sweetness' which is consequent upon 'contact' with the Lord. Then, I have described in some detail the precise requirements for this fruitful encounter of Christ in the sacrament, man's abiding union with God in Christ through faith and love. This analysis of the continued role of justifying faith in the Eucharist itself, in turn, has allowed me to pay particular attention in the third section of this chapter to the structural similarities between Eucharistic reception, and, the experience of God and Christ in both the initial act of justification by faith and the beatific vision, in order to enable us to perceive more clearly the precise place of the Eucharist in the spiritual life. The fourth section of Chapter three considers the implications of Thomas' teaching about the two main roles of faith in the Eucharist and attempts to decide whether the different aspects of his Eucharistic theory are entirely compatible. Here, Thomas'

description of the distinction between 'sacramental' and 'spiritual' eating, which is proposed specifically in relation to the question of the requirements for fruitful reception of Christ in the Eucharist, have been emphasized and evaluated in terms of the understanding of real presence disclosed in the second chapter. Finally, I have concluded the third chapter by noting two final and less important aspects of the role of faith in the Eucharist, namely, the need for faith in the reception of the grace of the Eucharist made available on account of its sacrificial nature, and, Thomas' notion of faith in the real presence as a meritorious act.

Chapter four attempts to evaluate some representative positions in the contemporary discussion of real presence in the Eucharist in the light of Thomas' understanding of the role of faith in this sacrament. This evaluation of the work of such thinkers as Schillebeeckx, Schoonenberg, and Davis, has allowed me to propose some significant conclusions about the abiding validity, and limitations, of Thomas' approach to the general question of the role of faith in this sacrament.

Quite apart from the legitimate desire to isolate an important aspect of Thomas' eucharistic teaching and reveal its relation to his general teaching on grace and justifying faith, this study has been motivated by other, more contemporary concerns. Not the least of these is my

conviction of the abiding value of Thomas' exposition of the central tenets of the faith for our own understanding of the Christian message. This conviction clearly runs counter to the prevalent view of Thomas in some influential quarters of contemporary theology. If one may generalize in this regard, the popular view of Aquinas' system which has arisen in recent years is that the importance given in his theological synthesis to the consideration of questions and positions not immediately relevant to the concerns of biblical Christianity has resulted in the neglect, if not the actual subversion, of the basic Christian proclamation of God's salvific work in Christ.<sup>1</sup> That I find this analysis of Aquinas untenable will emerge, hopefully, from the thesis as a whole. In the first place, the discussion of Thomas' positions on faith, grace and the sacraments in the first three chapters will challenge, indirectly at least, the accuracy of this common view. Moreover, the fourth chapter is designed particularly to highlight more vividly those aspects of his eucharistic thought in which Thomas has anticipated the concerns of the modern proponents of a viable and progressive re-interpretation of the Eucharist. Thus, granted the limitations inherent in a work of this type, I hope that this thesis will also serve to increase to some degree the awareness of the continued relevance of Thomas' witness to the truth of the Christian faith for modern theological reflection.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Justification by Faith and the Sacraments

The purpose of this chapter is to establish an adequate foundation upon which the analysis of the following chapters may be based. This entails primarily the description of the role of faith in the soteriology of Aquinas, with special reference to faith's part in the reception of both sacramental and extra-sacramental grace. Naturally, given the breadth and profundity of his portrayal of faith in the different parts of the Summa (for example, in his discussion of the grace of the New Law in I-II, 106ff., and, in his formal treatise on faith, II-II, 1ff.), this chapter makes no claim to exhaustiveness. Rather, only those elements of his discussion which contribute directly to the development of our theme are here included.

As described in his treatise on the grace of the New Law, for Thomas the situation of the unjust or unredeemed man is characterized by estrangement, bondage and disorder. By his sin, both original and actual, man has destroyed the original relationship to God of loving obedience which he enjoyed in the pristine state. Having been made for God, man is naturally meant to offer himself

in devoted service to his maker. But, by his sinful rebellion and offence against God,<sup>1</sup> man removes himself from subordination to God--rather than conform to the will of God, man allows his own willfulness to be his guide. Consequent upon this estrangement and withdrawal from God<sup>2</sup> is a further disruption within man himself. In the original state, there is a natural hierarchy of powers in man, the lower, less perfect or complete powers ultimately being responsible to man's reason. But, once sin comes to dominate man, this situation no longer applies: just as the whole man, and especially his reason and will, no longer is subject to God, neither do his lower faculties remain subject or fully responsive to the reason.<sup>3</sup> In turn, this freedom from the restraint of reason, which itself is corrupted and darkened by sin,<sup>4</sup> has further disastrous consequences for man, for the reckless abandon of these powers causes them to turn outward for fulfillment in the things of the world, thereby culminating in the loss of the whole man to inferior powers.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in place of the original freedom in subordination to God, sin establishes in human life the slavery and debasement inherent in bondage to the world.

Corresponding to this vision of the human predicament, the justification of the impious is depicted by St. Thomas as the establishment of a new relationship of man to God: by his saving act in Christ freely appropriated by man



through faith, God liberates man from the consequences of his sin and draws him back to his proper order to God. In this process of reconciliation by which sin is forgiven and a new relationship is formed, the grace of God works to overcome the results of human rebellion. Thus, for example, grace serves to heal the nature of man,<sup>6</sup> resolving the conflict in the inner being of man by re-establishing the proper harmony between his lower and higher parts.<sup>7</sup> This new harmony, however, is never complete in this world: faithful to the Christian notion of the 'not-yet' quality of redemption, Thomas argues that the power of God's grace, though real and creative, does not work to restrain completely the passionate aspect of man or make it fully compliant to the dictates of reason. Hence, although there is a real renewal of human nature consequent upon justification, there always remains for the justified the constant possibility of further (especially venial) sin<sup>8</sup>--and, thus, the necessity for God's further justifying work for the duration of life by the constant renewal and recreation of a man's justifying faith.<sup>9</sup> In addition to this restorative aspect of grace, God's grace has an elevating function, for it also grants to man those capacities required for the willing performance of the virtuous, God-serving acts which are in accordance with the life of grace and a relationship of love to God.<sup>10</sup>

Thomas' more refined analysis of justification

isolates and stresses two factors in the establishment of this new relationship between God and man which are absolutely crucial to the correct appreciation of this process. On the one hand, affirms Thomas, justification is the free and unmerited work of God, occasioned only by God's love for the individual sinner. There seems to be at least two reasons for Thomas's frequent observation in his treatise on the grace of the New Law that justification and all it entails is precisely the work and gift of God. First, in the formulation of his teaching, Thomas was conscious of the consistent testimony of Scripture, as well as that of the Augustinian stream of Catholic tradition, to the grace of God as the sole ground of salvation.<sup>11</sup> But, secondly, it also seems clear that Thomas' own analysis of the human condition and the consequences of sin had convinced him of this truth. For Thomas, justification, and the renewal which it brings, means for the individual that he rises up from sin and returns to God. But, he continues, rising up from sin does not simply mean to refrain from sinning (even though this, too, is not a simple possibility for man). Rather "rising" here denotes, especially, the freedom from the consequences and entanglement of his sin, both past and present, and man is clearly incapable of achieving this absolution by his own devices: after all, it is impossible for him to re-establish the harmony in his inner being which his own sin has destroyed,

or, to free himself from the bondage to inferior things created by his own sin; and, again, given that sin is offence against God, it is simply not within the purview of man to remit the debt of punishment owing to this sin.<sup>12</sup> Thus, concludes St. Thomas, justification can only be the gift of God: man, as he stands apart from God in sin, can do nothing to earn God's love or to flee his sin; rather, the restoration of order and peace is dependent on the initiative of God alone.<sup>13</sup>

But, on the other hand, Thomas similarly suggests that justification must also be viewed, in one sense at least, as the work of man. For St. Thomas, God respects the integrity of his creatures and prosecutes his will for them only in accordance with their natures. Now, it is a distinguishing mark of man that he is a being of free choice.<sup>14</sup> Hence, says Aquinas, the process of justification also requires on man's part a freely-made decision in faith for God and against sin.<sup>15</sup> Naturally, however, in light of his emphasis on justification as the gift of God's grace, Thomas is careful to refrain from suggesting that this free decision is in any way a human achievement which causes or necessitates the descent of God's grace. On the contrary, Thomas safeguards his initial insight by further arguing that this free decision of faith, the human response to God required in justification, is itself the effect of God's interior moving of

man by grace.<sup>16</sup> This means, then, that just as Augustine had done before him,<sup>17</sup> Thomas concluded that justifying faith is itself the gift of God, for he recognized that man only turns to God in faith when God has first moved him to do so.

The conclusion that faith itself is a gift of God (inasmuch as man is moved to faith by God) is repeated, albeit on slightly different grounds, by Thomas in some passages of his formal treatise on faith. Thus, for example, we read in his discussion of the 'meritorious' nature of faith in II-II, 2, 9c, that to believe is an act of mind assenting to the divine truth by virtue of the command of the will as this is moved by God through grace. It is possible to discern in this description of the interior act of faith, which incorporates aspects of Thomas' earlier analysis,<sup>18</sup> his attempt to do justice to the complexity of faith by delineating the human and divine 'contributions' to its act. On the one hand, the first part of this description clearly defines the human faculties involved in the interior act of faith. In the first place, Thomas assigns believing to the intellect as its subject and states that it involves an assent to the truth. Yet, the further description of the role of the will serves to distinguish this assent from other acts of the intellect in which a decision about the true and the false is involved. As Thomas had argued earlier in this treatise,<sup>19</sup>

the assents involved in understanding and science are immediately or mediately occasioned by their respective objects, for these objects are 'seen', that is, are themselves capable of actuating the assent of the mind. But, the objects of faith transcend man's natural capacities for knowledge and hence, Thomas notes, are incapable of so moving the mind in such a direct way to assent. For the assent of faith to occur, then, Thomas argues that the will must assume an integral role in this process--it is necessary that the will command or influence the intellect to give its assent to the truth presented for its consideration. Yet, Thomas adds, on the other hand, for the will to command the intellect to assent requires, in the first instance, a prior movement of the will by God to this action: only when God moves the will by 'interiorly inviting' man to believe through an interior inspiration<sup>20</sup> does faith become an actuality in any man's existence. Hence, even in the treatise on faith, Thomas asserts that the 'aid of God's grace', which help God grants in his mercy,<sup>21</sup> acts as the foundation, the unmerited source, of the human return to God in faith.<sup>22</sup>

Thomas' effort to coordinate this twofold conviction of the utter gratuity of justification as God's act, and, of the need for man's free response in faith, is perhaps more clearly reflected in his discussion, in the treatise on grace, of the different 'stages' in the initial conversion

of man to God. Although initial justification is instantaneous and its 'stages' simultaneous, Thomas has discerned four elements in the process of conversion, regarding which there is a definite priority of nature: first, the infusion of grace; second, the movement of free choice directed to God; third, the movement of free choice directed at sin; and, finally, the forgiveness of sins.<sup>23</sup> That the infusion of grace has priority demonstrates clearly Aquinas' basic belief that human justification is God's gift and has its initiative from God alone. Yet, as suggested by his placement at the end of the process of the forgiveness of sins, which surely is also God's achievement,<sup>24</sup> Thomas knew that justification also demanded an appropriate human response. However, in turn, the knowledge of this necessity did not blind Aquinas to the full significance of the central problem of human existence, that the intrusion of sin has rendered man incapable of rectifying his situation by redeeming himself from his sin. Hence, Thomas notes this appropriate free action of man in justification only after he has mentioned the infusion of grace. This secondary placement of the double movement of free choice required in the conversion of man to God thus clearly signifies that for Aquinas, that any man actually come to realize in his own life God's offer of justifying grace depends on God's prior act giving this man the power to respond to God's love.

The specific content of justifying faith is especially determined by God's saving work in Christ. That is, for St. Thomas, salvation is obtained only by the loving acceptance in faith of the work of Christ,<sup>25</sup> and in particular his death on the Cross, by those who are moved by God to return to him. Thus, Thomas writes,

as Paul says, 'To the one who believes in him who justifies the unrighteous, his faith is reckoned as justice, according to the purpose of God's grace.' (Rom. 4:5) From this it is clear that in the justification of the unrighteous an act of faith is required in this sense, that a man should believe that God is he who justifies men through the mystery of Christ.<sup>26</sup>

This analysis of the centrality of Christ for justifying faith, in turn, causes Thomas to advance as his basic understanding of the Church that it is the 'community of those who are redeemed by their faith in Christ.'<sup>27</sup> By this, Thomas indicates his awareness of the Church as, first and foremost, the collection or assembly of those who have been lifted out of the mass of unredeemed humanity, freed from the grasp of sin, and set in a new order to God, through and on the basis of Christ's self-offering to God on their behalf. The value of this definition is manifest for it correctly states the dependence of the Church on Christ for its being. The Church first attains, and then retains, existence only on account of Christ, whose achievement of the Father's will in overcoming sin and death by his own death on the Cross has set

up, as it were, the objective condition of human redemption. Men, in turn, as implied by this notion of the Church, realize the fruits of Christ's achievement and are included among those who are turned anew to God when they have personally accepted this work, as done for them, by their faith in Christ.

Yet, the definition of the Church or the mystical body of Christ as the 'group of the saved centred in Christ' does not exhaust the Thomistic notion of this new community. In addition, Thomas argues that the Church also serves as the principal vehicle of the communication of the news and the power of God's saving work.<sup>28</sup> Although Thomas is also aware of the proclaiming function of the Church in preaching, for Aquinas, the main task of the Church in its activity in the world is to make available the grace of Christ through its celebration of the sacraments.<sup>29</sup> For Thomas, the sacraments of the New Law are causative signs of a salvific reality.<sup>30</sup> This means, first of all, that Thomas is cognizant of the function of the sacraments as signs which inform men of God's action: they signify especially the death of Christ on the Cross and thereby point men anew to the source of their new life. Yet, Thomas adds, the sacraments are not merely 'in the category of signs'. By their ordination by Christ,<sup>31</sup> the sacraments also have the capacity to make available that which they signify. That sacraments thus



effect what they signify when they are properly performed-- that is, when they are offered by a priest who has been duly ordained and who has therefore received the priestly character which grants him the right to work 'in the person of Christ', and, moreover, who himself has the intention 'to do what the Church intends to do' when he celebrates the sacrament--does not, however, indicate that they grant grace by virtue of any intrinsic or natural qualities. Rather, it is Christ's own use of selected material objects in his institution of the sacraments which has deputed to them as supernatural function, to act as the instruments through which the grace of his Passion is communicated to his people.<sup>32</sup> Hence, not even in his doctrine of the sacraments as grace-bestowing does Thomas fall into the error of denying the primacy of Christ for men by assigning to mere material objects a too-prominent role in the order of salvation. The sacraments are able to offer grace to believers only because Christ himself has chosen to use them as a means through which his Spirit may work to bestow Christ's bounty on those who depend on him for sustenance.<sup>33</sup>

Now, among the modern interpreters of St. Thomas, there seems to be some confusion about the nature of the relation between the sacraments (and the power of God here offered) and the faith by which men first come to God through Christ and which then, moreover, serves as

the principal bond of their union to God. For example, there are some scholars who find it possible to outline the Thomistic soteriology and the role of the sacraments as means of incorporation into the mystical body without allowing any substantial role at all to justifying faith.<sup>34</sup> On the one hand, certain factors make this reticence somewhat understandable. First, one can point to disputes in church history since Aquinas: the emphasis on the sacraments as causing grace in man apart from any consideration of the faith of the recipient may be symptomatic of the (quite legitimate) concern to protect the faith from a dissolution into a morass of subjectivity, on account of which there would be in Christian life no place for externals or for public and organized proclamation of dependence on God or for anything beyond the merely personal. Secondly, Thomas' repeated statement that the sacraments do effect what they signify, as well as one or two incautious affirmations that the sacraments can produce grace in man (without adding explicit reference here to the need for faith), may have encouraged the misinterpretation by these scholars, who overemphasize the power of the sacraments, of the main thrust of his sacramental theology. Nevertheless, on the other hand, Rahner is surely correct when he ascribes to St. Thomas the view that without the 'living faith' of the individual (that is, faith formed by love, that faith by which one

is joined fruitfully to Christ), a man simply does not take to himself sacramental grace.<sup>35</sup> For St. Thomas, the sacraments do offer, infallibly, the grace which they signify. But, as Thomas says repeatedly in his discussion of the sacraments, this particular person only receives the grace therein offered when he, for his part, receives the sacrament in faith.<sup>36</sup> In other words, then, in the theology of Aquinas, the mere fact of the sacraments does not alter or remove the requirements for actual reception of grace which we have discerned in the earlier discussion of initial justification. On the contrary, the reception even of sacramental grace is said by Aquinas to be dependent on the actual union of the believer to Christ, and his passion, by that faith which is itself the gift of God.

Although there are numerous passages in the Summa which confirm this interpretation of St. Thomas, perhaps his understanding of the continued role of faith even within the sacramental structure may be best illustrated through the examination of his thought on the difference between the sacraments of the Old and the New Law.<sup>37</sup>

For Aquinas, the 'sacraments' of the Old Law also were signs of the work of Christ, prefiguring as yet to come his achievement before God on man's behalf. But, unlike the sacraments instituted by Christ himself, these earlier signs did not effectively offer the grace which they signified. The basic reason for their inability to cause

grace derived from the fact that they preceded in time the existence of the source of sacramental grace, the Passion of Christ: as Thomas argues, a given reality which does not yet exist on the plane of natural realities cannot initiate any movement which consists in the use of exterior things.<sup>38</sup> However, though the sacraments of the Old Law did not themselves cause grace or 'conjoin' men to the Passion, the celebrations of these rites yet were occasions in which the men of the Old dispensation could realize grace in their own lives, for their participation in the observance of these ceremonies was a sign of their faith, a public proclamation of it, in the Christ who was yet to come.<sup>39</sup> This means, then, that the bestowal of grace accompanied, as it were, the performance of the Old Law sacraments, for this performance signified that justifying faith in Christ, whether explicit or implicit, by which even the men living in the state of the Old Law were enabled to enter into the new life founded on God's work in Christ.<sup>40</sup>

But, after Christ, the observance of the sacraments has gained a new dimension. Although the celebration of the sacraments of the New Law remains at one level the public proclamation of faith, (although now it is in the Christ who has already come and performed the Father's will)--in this sense, even the sacraments of the New Law may be designated 'protestations of faith',<sup>41</sup>--the offering

of these New sacraments also brings with it the actual offering of new grace: they are, as has been stated, signs which effect what they signify (because they follow in time the Passion and have been instituted by Christ). Nevertheless, Thomas argues, that these sacraments actually offer grace does not do away with the need for justifying faith on the part of any individual for the actual reception of this sacramental grace. It is not the case that whereas faith was a necessity for those who lived before the time of Christ, it has become superfluous for those to whom the actual means of God's saving plan has been revealed. Rather, grace is actualized by any man only when he approaches the sacrament while joined to Christ and his Passion by love and faith: it is faith in the Passion as God's decisive act for the resolution of the human predicament that grants to man, in effect, the grace which otherwise would remain a mere (unaccepted) offer in the sacrament.<sup>42</sup> Hence, Thomas concludes in this regard, in both the Old and the New states, justifying faith in Christ constitutes an integral part in the reception of the grace associated (in whatever way) with the sacramental event.<sup>43</sup>

This insight of Thomas' general sacramental theology into the continued need for justifying faith for the appropriation of the grace offered in sacramental form is repeated and amplified in Thomas' specific discussion

of the Eucharist. Although the fact of the real presence forces him to advance a slightly modified version of the actual source of grace in this sacrament as compared with the others (as shall be seen later in the thesis), Thomas insists on the need for the living faith of the individual for fruitful reception of this sacrament as well. That this is the case may be briefly demonstrated at this point through the examination of a central article in his treatise on the Eucharist, III, 78, 3, in which Thomas has had occasion to consider the two main roles of faith in the Eucharist.<sup>44</sup> In III, 78, 3, Thomas discusses the suitability of the form of the consecration of the wine. Now, in III, 78, 2c, in his discussion of the suitability of the form of the consecration of the bread, Thomas noted that the suitability of sacramental forms is derived from their accuracy in signifying the effect of the celebration of the sacrament. In terms of the consecration of the bread, Thomas showed that this meant that the form has to signify adequately the change of the bread into the body of Christ, and do this with respect to three aspects of the change--the change itself, the starting-point of the change, and, the term of the change. On this basis, then, Thomas concluded that the form, 'This is my body,' suitably signifies the sacramental effect: the verb in the form denotes that the change has occurred by the power of the consecration (the change itself); the

demonstrative pronoun 'this' suggests that although the substance of the bread no longer remains after the conversion, its accidents do (the starting-point); and, the noun 'body' properly describes the term of the conversion.

Having thus established the criteria for judging the suitability of sacramental forms, in III, 78, 3c, Thomas concludes that, at least as far as the opening phrase of the form, 'This is the chalice of my blood,' is concerned, there can be no question of the suitability of the form of the consecration of the wine. But, as Thomas recognizes, the problem which is especially posed in this form for determining its suitability is created by the three phrases immediately following the opening phrase, namely, "(1) of the new and eternal testament, (2) the mystery of faith, (3) which will be poured out for you and for many for the remission of sins;" indeed, Thomas notes, some had argued that these words did not in fact constitute part of the essence of this form. For Thomas, the validity of including these phrases in this form is determined by their value in explicating the words of the opening phrase, i.e., the 'blood' of Christ. In particular, he argues for their inclusion in the form because they serve to signify more precisely the beneficial effects of worthy reception of the sacrament: they describe the power of Christ's blood, poured out in

the Passion, whose effects are operative in this sacrament. Hence, considering each of these phrases in turn, Thomas explains how each evokes a particular effect of the Passion which is conveyed to us in the Eucharist: by the first phrase, for example, is denoted the gift of eternal life; and, by the third, the forgiveness of the sins which separate us from our heavenly inheritance. Most important, however, for our purposes, is Thomas' explanation here of the signification of the second phrase, 'the mystery of faith'--this phrase, he says, recalls that justification created by grace which is ours through faith and is offered to us in the Eucharist.

Now, in III, 78, 3 ad 6, Thomas turns to a more detailed discussion of the meanings of this phrase, 'the mystery of faith.' Invoking terminology used elsewhere,<sup>45</sup> the sixth objection of this article had suggested that it was not fitting to use the word 'faith' in relation to the Eucharist--after all, this objection observed, it is Baptism, not the Eucharist, which is sometimes described as the 'sacrament of faith.' Rather, the Eucharist is the 'sacrament of charity.' In response, Thomas argues that there are two main reasons for employing the word 'faith' in conjunction with the Eucharist. The first reason offered in ad 6 for describing the Eucharist as the 'mystery of faith' has to do with the manner of Christ's presence in the Eucharist: because Christ begins



to be present in the sacrament as a result of the miraculous conversion of the substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, since this mode of presence cannot be reached by the natural powers of the intellect, real presence may be held by faith alone. The second reason justifying this terminology is basically the same as that given in the corpus: we can use the word 'faith' here for it is by faith that the grace offered in the Eucharist is appropriated by us, inasmuch as the Passion of Christ justifies us through faith in it.<sup>46</sup> Hence, as shown by the affirmations of this article, even in his Eucharistic thought, Thomas also displays his sense of the continued need for faith, and the bond which it establishes with Christ, for the realization in the individual's own life of the offer of sacramental grace.

With the completion of this brief review of the role of faith in the reception of grace in Thomas, it is now possible to turn to the more detailed examination of the roles of faith in the treatise on the Eucharist. The analysis of the third chapter will portray the role of faith in the reception of Eucharistic grace, resuming in a sense the discussion of the present chapter in an expressly Eucharistic setting. The purpose of this third chapter will be the demonstration that despite the difference which distinguishes this sacrament from the others, the

Eucharist yet conforms to the broad pattern of interaction between faith and grace outlined in this chapter. The second chapter, to which we shall now proceed, has as its principal goal the delineation of a somewhat different aspect of faith than that with which the present chapter has been chiefly concerned, its role in resolving the specific problem for knowledge occasioned by Thomas' understanding of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Yet, although the second chapter thus stresses more the 'cognitive' side of faith, inasmuch as Thomas argues that the offer of the grace of this sacrament arises especially from the presence under the species of the Christ who suffered for men, this discussion of real presence and faith in the next chapter will also contribute in its turn to the proper evaluation of the discussion of Chapter Three.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Real Presence and Faith

At various levels, the Eucharist displays the capacity for signification demanded of the sacraments of the Old and the New Law. For Thomas, in the first instance, the use of specific material objects in the sacraments is determined by the innate appropriateness of these objects for manifesting the spiritual truths associated with each of the sacraments.<sup>1</sup> Hence, although he affirms that the very fact that Christ himself used these same items in the institution of the Eucharist is sufficient reason for affirming the suitability of bread and wine as the basic matter of this sacrament, Thomas nevertheless adds that among the reasons which may also be adduced to establish more completely the 'reasonableness' of this choice, we may point to the internal composition of each of these objects: it is apt, he says, that elements which being one, are themselves made out of many (i.e., the bread is made from many different grains, the wine, from many grapes) should serve to denote that more intense unity of the mystical body, of the members of the Church to their Head, which is occasioned by the fruitful reception of the Eucharist.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as one might naturally expect,

Thomas is not averse to mentioning in numerous contexts the common function of these objects in human life as further support for their inclusion in this sacrament. As will be seen in the next chapter, through the gift of this sacrament, Christ endows his people with the strength which all need to continue on their journey to God.<sup>3</sup> Thus, Thomas says, it is fitting that in the sacrament, Christ has used the food and drink commonly used by all mankind for the maintenance of natural life as the sacramental means for the bestowal of this necessary spiritual nourishment.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, as Thomas writes in the article in which he first relates in detailed fashion the Eucharist to its spiritual effect,<sup>5</sup> by the giving of himself in this sacrament in the form of food and drink (per modum cibi et potus), Christ shows us that all that material food and drink for bodily life--sustain it, build it up, restore and content it (sustenat, auget, reparat, et deloccat)--Christ does for us in terms of our spiritual existence, through the 'spiritual food' of this sacrament.

Other 'significations' mentioned by Thomas in his discussion of the Eucharist, however, depend less obviously on the natural attributes of the matter of the sacrament or on the normal role of food and drink in human existence and more directly upon the divine 'creative' activity: that is, the establishment of these additional facets of the symbolic activity of this sacrament is dependent on Christ's

decision to assume the material elements of the Eucharist into an explicitly supernatural dimension by relating them, by word and action, to the various stages of the mystery of salvation. This aspect of Eucharistic symbolism becomes especially manifest in Thomas' treatment of the relation of the Eucharist to the Passion. For Aquinas, the Eucharist denotes the Passion in a variety of ways. In general terms, the Eucharist constitutes the basic 'sacrament of the Passion,' designated by Christ to remind the faithful of his work on their behalf. Hence, Thomas writes,<sup>6</sup> that the institution of this sacrament was 'wise' may be seen from a consideration of the requirements of human salvation. As biblical passages such as Romans 3:25f. suggest, salvation is only possible by faith in the Passion. Thus, Thomas continues, since men at all times have needed something which may stand as a sign representative of the Passion (aliquod repraesentativum), it was good that Christ bequeathed to his Church this sacramental commemoration (rememorativum) of this central facet of God's saving work for men.<sup>7</sup> Thomas elsewhere has proceeded to depict in more specific terms the diverse ways in which the Eucharist acts to represent and commemorate the Passion to the faithful. Thus, for example, for Aquinas, Christ's decree that there be two species in this sacrament and, moreover, a separate consecration of the wine is designed to recall to men that in his saving death on the cross, the blood of Christ

was separated from his body.<sup>8</sup> The breaking of the species of the bread also discloses a relationship between this sacrament and the Passion, for just as the individual species serve as sacramenta of Christ's body and blood respectively, the act of breaking is itself a particular sacramentum of Christ's death.<sup>9</sup> Finally, it may also be noted that the designation of the Eucharist as a 'sacrifice' derives, in part at least (see below in the text), from the fact that this sacrament signifies the Passion: as Thomas says, this name may be justifiably appropriated by this sacrament because in a special way, the Eucharist is a 'commemoration of the Passion, which was the true sacrifice' (. . . est commemorativum Dominicae passionis, quae fuit verum sacrificium) of Christ before God on our behalf.<sup>10</sup> Hence, just as he has done in his discussion of the other sacraments, in his examination of the Eucharist, Thomas makes clear that an essential feature of this sacrament too is its ability to serve as a sign of saving truth.

Nevertheless, despite the recognition of its resemblance to the other sacraments in this regard, a constant feature of Thomas' discussion of the Eucharist is his notion of the distinctiveness of this particular sacrament of the New Law. Now, on the one hand, Thomas' conviction of the uniqueness of the Eucharist finds expression in a variety of forms in the Summa. Hence,

for example, Thomas notes that the Eucharist achieves completion in a manner different from that of the other sacraments of the New Law: whereas the others are perfected in the application of the matter to the recipient (in usu materiae), the Eucharist is brought to completion in the consecration of the matter by the priest (in consecratione materiae);<sup>11</sup> the validity of this sacrament, in other words, is in no way dependent on its actual reception by the faithful.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, in Thomas' analysis, the Eucharist also differs from the other sacraments by virtue of the fact that it alone among the sacraments is both a sacrament and a sacrifice.<sup>13</sup> But, on the other hand, it is possible to reduce these statements made by St. Thomas about the uniqueness of the Eucharist to one basic feature of this sacrament. In the other sacraments of the New Law, it is the power of Christ which is alone conveyed to the recipient. But, in the Eucharist, it is not only Christ's power, but, indeed, Christ himself who is given to his faithful. Hence, Thomas states explicitly in a passage in which he has had occasion to observe the cause of the distinctiveness of the Eucharist, the source of the uniqueness of this sacrament is the very presence of Christ himself in sacramental form.<sup>14</sup> Thus, to return to the various statements which Thomas has made concerning this sacrament's distinctiveness, it is because the sacrament realizes the presence of Christ

in an intensive form to the Church that the Eucharist alone is perfected in consecratione materiae. There are, Thomas says at one point,<sup>15</sup> two ways in which something can be sacred. One is in a relative sense, as is the case for the other sacraments: they are not sacred in themselves but only insofar as through them, sanctifying power can be applied to men. Hence, since this value of 'sacredness' in the order of salvation derives from their relation to men, it is only at that time when they are actually applied to men for sanctifying purposes that they are in fact brought to realization. The matter is somewhat different for the Eucharist. Though Thomas would never condone the dismissal of the reception of this sacrament by the faithful as a practice of secondary importance--that is, for Aquinas, the Eucharist is not merely, e.g., to be adored from afar, but is meant to be received by the members of the Church<sup>16</sup>--there nevertheless is a legitimate sense in which for him the valid celebration of this sacrament is independent of its further use by the faithful.<sup>17</sup> Unlike the other sacraments, the Eucharist is sacred absolutely, that is, in itself and without reference to men, for by the power of the consecratory formulae, that which is sacred in itself, Christ himself, has been brought into relation to the sacramental species--in other words, it is the conviction that the consecration has as its primary aim Christ's real presence, and not the conveyance



of grace through sensible means, that leads Thomas to state that usus fidelium is only consequent to the perfection of this sacrament in the consecration. Similarly, with regard to the second way in which Thomas has sought to define the distinctive character of this sacrament, Thomas' belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist has also fortified his conviction about the sacrificial quality of the Eucharist: as he argues, quite apart from its commemorative function by which it represents the Passion, it is especially because the Eucharist contains Christus passus, the Christ who suffered in his sacrifice on the cross for men, that this sacrament is apt to serve as the basic 'sacrifice' of the Church in its worship of God.<sup>18</sup>

In the light of this conclusion that real presence constitutes the distinctive feature of this sacrament, it is not surprising that the attempt to explain in consistent fashion the presence of Christ in the Eucharist dominates the treatise on the Eucharist in the Summa Theologiae (III, 73-83).<sup>19</sup> In the formulation of his teaching on real presence, Thomas was guided by insights derived from the study of both Scriptural and traditional sources in western church history. In the first place, his account of the Eucharist was naturally informed by the explicitly Eucharistic passages in the New Testament--the accounts of the Last Supper in the Synoptics, the

Pauline discussion of this sacrament in I Corinthians (chapters 10 and 11), as well as the corresponding passage in the Gospel of John (the end of chapter 6 on the 'bread of life') which was especially valuable for the determination of the effects of worthy reception. This dependence on Scripture is manifested, for example, in the very belief of Aquinas in the real presence; that is, for Thomas (as for much of the Catholic tradition) the words of institution, 'This is my body,' taken somewhat literally, imposed the necessity of belief in a specific presence of Christ in the sacrament.<sup>20</sup> Other facets of the Eucharistic belief of St. Thomas disclose a similar reliance on the biblical testimony. Hence, in the development of his teaching on the symbolism of the Eucharist, Thomas sought to justify his interpretation by relating the various expressions of this symbolism to the appropriate biblical passages. For example, that the Eucharist constituted a commemorative sign of the Passion was confirmed by reference to the text in I Corinthians (11:26) in which Paul affirms that as often as Christians eat this bread and drink from this cup, they proclaim the death of the Lord.<sup>21</sup> I Corinthians also provided Thomas with support for his depiction of the Eucharist as the sacrament of church unity, for in 10:17, for example, Paul writes that being many, Christians are yet one, as many partake of the one loaf of the Supper.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, interpreters of the Eucharist in the Latin Church had succeeded in incorporating other biblical passages, less explicitly 'eucharistic' in tone, into the general framework within which the problem of real presence had to be discussed. An important text of this type was that from Matthew (26:11) in which the Lord announces that his presence will be withdrawn at some point from his people until the end of time.<sup>23</sup> For exponents of real presence, the implications of such a text (read in the light of the resurrection and ascension) were enormous. First, that the presence of Christ was removed from the human dimension until the consummation of all things meant that no account of Eucharistic presence which sought to 'bring Christ down from heaven' could be considered adequate: the meaning of the text was that as far as the natural presence of Christ was concerned, since Christ after the resurrection had retained the characteristics of his historical body (most importantly, the ability to exist in only one place at a time) and the place of Christ's body was now in heaven, the Church would be separated from the Lord in this sense until the reunion with him in the heavenly homeland. Hence, in terms of the Eucharist, Matthew 26 (and other like passages) demanded a description of the specific presence of Christ in the sacrament, as promised by Christ in the pertinent New Testament texts, without violating the truth of this

'confinement' of Christ to the sphere of God in heaven. Secondly, consequent upon this notion of the cessation of the natural presence of Christ, the belief that Christ had withdrawn from the human dimension increased the burden on the theologians charged with the responsibility of developing an adequate conception of the Eucharistic presence, for although Thomas and others were clearly cognizant of a continued 'presence' of Christ through his beneficial effects (received by faith both sacramentally and non-sacramentally), the belief that Christ had otherwise withdrawn from the intimate contact with the faithful implicit in 'natural' presence underscored the necessity of stating the truth of real presence in a way that would actually do justice to the realistic nature of this unique presence of Christ in the world.<sup>24</sup>

For St. Thomas, earlier attempts in the Catholic tradition to resolve adequately the problems associated with real presence were valuable in another way for his own effort to formulate an authentic interpretation of this central facet of eucharistic belief.<sup>25</sup> Most importantly, these earlier approaches provided him with sufficient evidence of the perils to which the theologian of real presence was liable in his own account of this mystery of the faith. On the one hand, through the study of tradition, Thomas became acquainted with the difficulties entailed by a too-physical conception of the presence of

Christ in this sacrament. Undoubtedly the most notorious example of a rather crude notion of Eucharistic presence is found in the oath administered to Berengar by the Church in 1059. In this confession designed to establish his faithfulness to the Catholic belief in the Eucharist, Berengar was required to affirm, among other things, that in this sacrament, the priest handles the body of Christ not only sacramentally, but in actual fact, and, moreover, that it is the body of Christ itself which is torn by the teeth of the faithful.<sup>26</sup> Although they were able to avoid the crudity of expression of this oath, on account the limitations of the conceptual tools with which they approached the question of real presence, others similarly advanced a rather physical conception of Christ's Eucharistic presence. The equation of the Catholic belief in real presence with the affirmation of (a more or less) local presence in the sacrament, in turn, necessitated the consideration in eucharistic theology of a number of related difficulties created by this 'solution'. Thus, quite apart from the question of the legitimacy of ascribing to Christ two places in which he was present at the same time--in heaven and in the sacrament--while nevertheless believing that he had retained a human body, theologians trying to establish real presence in this way had to explain how, for example, it was possible for a body of Christ's magnitude to exist wholly within the

confines of a host of considerably smaller size,<sup>27</sup> or, again, given that the consecrated host is broken in the celebration of the sacrament, how it may be that the whole Christ, at first present in the integral host, may also then be wholly present in a localized fashion under each of the fragments.<sup>28</sup> But, on the other hand, Thomas was similarly aware that the more symbolic interpretation of the Eucharist, which had also been advanced at different times in church history on the basis of the authority of Augustine, was simply unable to capture the ontological profundity of this Eucharistic presence. Thus, although the efforts of, for example, Berengar himself<sup>29</sup> and perhaps of Ratramnus<sup>30</sup> to solve the problem by developing the concept of a presence through signs were superficially attractive (inasmuch as they could avoid the unenlightening considerations entailed by the affirmation of a local presence), Thomas in the Summa was unable to adopt this solution. Rather, on the basis of Christ's words preserved and proclaimed by the inspired teaching of the Church, Thomas had to affirm the presence of Christ in the sacrament, not only on the merely symbolic level (in signo), but indeed in very truth (secundum veritatem)<sup>31</sup> and, accordingly, he sought to develop his own teaching in complete conformity with the reality of this presence.

Despite the fact that Thomas' conviction of the inadequacy of a symbolic interpretation thus led him to

share with the advocates of a physical presence of Christ the concern to maintain the reality of the Eucharistic presence, nevertheless, as has been noted, Thomas disassociated himself completely from this view which bound Christ locally to the sacrament. Indeed, in the explanation of his own view of real presence in the Summa, Thomas consciously contrasts his position with that of the theologians of a physical presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This is seen, for example, in his consideration of the ways in which Christ may possibly begin to be in the Eucharist. For Aquinas, given that Christ really is in the sacrament, and, moreover, that this presence is occasioned by the consecration, there are only two ways in which Christ may begin to exist under the species, by being brought under them by local motion, and, by something already present being changed into Christ. But, he notes, at least three serious objections can be raised against the first alternative. First, to say that Christ begins to be in the sacrament through local motion would undermine the Catholic belief in the continuing presence of Christ in heaven until the end of time, for as a result of local motion, Christ would cease to be in heaven, inasmuch as anything which is locally moved leaves where it was. Secondly, passage from one place to another requires movement through intermediate places, and, we might here interject, this is not consonant with the words

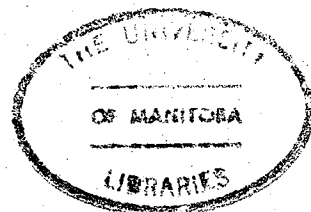
of institution which nowhere suggest that as a result of the consecration, Christ first begins to be here, then there, and finally in the host. Rather, the consecration entails, immediately upon the utterance of the final word of the consecratory formula, Christ's new presence only in the expressed term of the consecration, the sacrament of the altar. Finally, this view that Christ's presence is the result of movement is also unsatisfactory for it is impossible to account in these terms for Christ's multiple presence in the various places in the world where the Eucharist is being celebrated at the same time. That is, there can be only one terminus of any movement to place; but, this sacrament is celebrated in numerous locales simultaneously; if, then, Christ's presence is consequent upon motion, it would be impossible for him to be present at any one time in more than one of these locales, a conclusion which is obviously unacceptable to the belief of the Church in Christ's unfailing presence in the Eucharist in whatever place the sacrament is properly celebrated.<sup>32</sup> For Aquinas, therefore, the untenability of this first position necessitates the affirmation of the second. Hence, Thomas concludes, Christ can begin to be in the sacrament only by means of the conversion of something which is already present--namely, as the words of consecration imply, the substances of the bread and wine--into the body and blood of the heavenly Christ.



As suggested by the conclusion of this brief introductory statement of the Thomistic analysis of the manner in which real presence is initiated, Thomas has incorporated into his teaching on the Eucharist certain concepts found elsewhere in his thought. Specifically, the explanation which he offers displays his understanding of the sacrament in terms of a number of concepts first found in the Aristotelian philosophy of nature. In the first place, Thomas describes the introduction of Christ into the sacrament in terms of a change of the substance of one thing, for example, of the bread, into that of another, in this case, of the body of Christ in heaven. For Aristotle, all things in the material world can be classified into one of the ten categories.<sup>33</sup> Into the first category, substance, is placed all those things which do not have their existence in another: 'substance' is the name given to that to the definition of which pertains independent existence or existence not in a subject, as is the case, for example, of a man or a tree.<sup>34</sup> In the case of these substantial entities in the material world, they do not exist as a modification of other things; rather, inasmuch as they are self-subsistent objects, they serve as the subject of such modification and activity. Related to this notion of substance as the subject of modification is the notion of 'accident,' with which the other nine Aristotelian categories in the classification

of nature are concerned (e.g., quantity, quality, place, relation, action and passion, time). Whereas existence in itself is said to belong to substance, to the definition of accident pertains the idea that these other 'things' in the material world do not have independent existence<sup>35</sup>--that is, accidents are only insofar as they have being in another, in substance as their subject. Inasmuch, then, as it is accident which denotes the modification of substance noted above, in normal Thomistic thought (following Aristotle), there is a certain inseparability of substance and accident: not only do accidents attain being only by inhering in their substance, but, in turn, the nature of substantial entities comes to expression only through these accidental modifications.<sup>36</sup> It is in view of this latter aspect of the relation of accidents and substance that Thomas concludes in the treatise on the Eucharist that the intellectual knowledge of substance presupposes a prior acquaintance with the accidents of a thing via the senses.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to his use of the concepts of 'substance' and 'accident', Thomas likewise utilizes in his exposition of real presence the complementary notions of 'form' and 'matter', which are invoked in the philosophical analysis of natural change. 'Form' specifies the determination of a thing in a certain way, the actualization of the thing's potentiality to be such and such.<sup>38</sup> In terms of substance



and accident, two kinds of 'form' may be distinguished. First, there is the 'substantial form,' the form which makes this to be one kind of substance and not another. Secondly, there is the 'accidental form,' which serves as a further modification of the substance thus determined by the substantial form.<sup>39</sup> For example, it is the substantial form which makes an object to be a tree by 'granting' it the essence of 'treeness' which it shares with other objects of the same kind. But, it is the accidental forms which further cause this substance 'tree' to be a tree of this size and in this place.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, what is determined by both kinds of form is called by Thomas 'matter': 'matter' is the term which designates the potency to be which is actualized by the form. In relation to substantial form, this matter is called 'first' or 'prime' matter,<sup>41</sup> and it is this matter which serves to distinguish, through individuation, a thing from other things of the same type: that is, by virtue of a common kind of form, things of the same type share a similar essence; yet, these things are 'marked off' from each other by their reception in diverse matter.<sup>42</sup> In terms of accidental form, the entire substance, composed of both substantial form and prime matter, constitutes the matter or potency for change actualized by new accidental determinations.

Although Thomas finds it convenient to express his

vision of the distinctive presence of Christ in the Eucharist in terms of the concepts of substance and accident, and, of form and matter, his use of these notions has not caused him to reduce the eucharistic conversion required by Christ's promise to the apostles of his presence in the sacrament to an event on the merely natural level. Rather, in various ways, Thomas in his treatise on the Eucharist has clearly articulated his conception of the uniqueness of this change as a wholly supernatural event which differs significantly from the changes found in the natural world.<sup>43</sup> Thus, for example, a prominent feature of Aquinas' presentation of the real presence of Christ in this sacrament is his emphasis on the utter radicality of the eucharistic change. In nature, change may be either accidental or substantial. In accidental change, one accidental form recedes into matter and a new one is educed in its place: for example, a substance which was formerly white undergoes an accidental change when it becomes black. What is normally called 'substantial' change in nature, however, denotes a more profound change in the being of a thing. An example of such a change is when a tree is burned and is reduced to ashes: here, the substantial form of the tree has withdrawn, replaced in turn by that of the ashes.<sup>44</sup> The Eucharistic change posited by St. Thomas in the Summa, on the other hand, is neither accidental nor substantial

in the sense just described. Rather, the change of the bread into the body of Christ, and, of the wine into the blood of Christ, is understood to be an even more radical change involving the conversion of the entire substance of both the bread and the wine into the entire substance of both the body and blood of Christ: tota substantia panis convertitur in totam substantiam corporis Christi, et tota substantia vini in totam substantiam sanguinis Christi.<sup>45</sup> This change of whole substance into whole substance, of the form and matter of one thing into those of another,<sup>46</sup> which Thomas calls 'transubstantiation' in a few places in which he wishes to establish his conformity to the teaching of the Church,<sup>47</sup> thus involves a total transformation in the original being of the bread and wine: as Thomas affirms, in this conversion, what was first bread and wine is changed completely by virtue of the consecration by which Christ's will in regard to the elements is expressed, having become the body and blood of Christ in sacramental form.

The conviction that transubstantiation signifies the complete change of one substance into another, in turn, allows Aquinas to specify a second way in which this change differs from the changes found in the natural world. In both substantial and accidental change, there is a subject which undergoes these changes and which, therefore, is common to both terms of the change: in these changes,

it is the subject which is first in potency and then in act.<sup>48</sup> In accidental change, for example, substance acts as the subject of the change: it is the same thing which increases in size or is first one colour, and then another; and, in substantial change, matter constitutes the subject of this more complete change. But, in the Eucharistic conversion, as suggested by the affirmation that entire substance, form and matter, is changed into entire substance, there is no subject common to both terms of the change,<sup>49</sup> for neither the form nor the matter of the starting-point of this change remains at the end of the conversion. Hence, in this regard, Thomas sees in the Eucharistic conversion a parallel to creation<sup>50</sup> (where in a manner of speaking there was a similar disjunction between the respective terms of the 'change'), a parallel which incidentally Thomas finds valuable for the development of the related description of the Eucharist as possible only because of the power of God to effect the conversion.

Yet, for our present purposes, there is one additional feature of the Eucharistic change which establishes the absolute uniqueness of this conversion and which, moreover, suggests a significant departure by St. Thomas from his more typical teaching on the relation of substance and accidents.<sup>51</sup> As was indicated earlier, in the philosophy of Aquinas, substance and accidents are normally

thought to exist in a certain mutual dependence. In the first place, for St. Thomas, accidents by definition do not attain being except insofar as they exist in a subject--to the definition of accident, as was noted, pertains the idea that it does not possess independent existence. Conversely, substance too manifests a type of dependence on accidents for, in the corporeal world, substance only exists as modified and expressed by its accidents. In his discussion of the Eucharist, however, neither feature of this analysis of substance and accident seems fully to apply. With regard to the dependence of accident on substance for its being, for example, it is a requirement of Thomas' eucharistic thought that the substances of the bread and wine no longer remain after the consecration: the only way in which the body and blood of the heavenly Christ may begin to be in the sacrament is if something already present in the terminus a quo, that is, the substance of the bread and wine, is changed into Christ's body and blood. Usually, the removal of substance would occasion the destruction of the accidents dependent on that substance for existence: hence, for example, when a tree is reduced to ashes by burning, its accidents are not 'passed on' to the new substance but rather cease to exist altogether.<sup>52</sup> But, as the evidence of the senses discloses, this has not happened as a result of the conversion in the Eucharist of the substances of

the bread and wine into those of the body and blood of Christ; on the contrary, the senses perceive no change in the appearance of the bread and wine at all, despite the 'departure' of the substances upon which these accidents are dependent for being.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, with regard to the second aspect of Thomas' more typical delineation of the relation between substance and accident, we can perceive no change in the original elements even in terms of the capacity of these elements to effect change in surrounding bodies--not only do the remaining accidents of the bread and wine continue to be perceivable by sense, which capacity to modify the senses is more or less proper to accidents; they now are able also to perform the function (e.g., nourish) which is proper to the (departed) substantial forms of the bread and wine.<sup>54</sup> For Aquinas, that the accidents of the bread and wine continue in existence despite the change of their substances,<sup>55</sup> and, that they are able to do all that bread and wine could do when their substances were present, derive from the decision of God to allow these accidents to remain after the consecration and to grant them this power to 'act as substance': though He could have decreed that even these accidents were changed into those of Christ's body and blood so that Christ would be received under his own appearances, in accordance with His providence God so works that after the consecration, these accidents retain the completely



functional being proper to the integral bread and wine.<sup>56</sup>

That Thomas has grounded this teaching on subsistent accident firmly on the belief in the power of God to effect what is otherwise impossible can be seen more clearly in Thomas' rebuttal of an 'objection' to this teaching which he addresses in at least two different places in the treatise on the Eucharist. According to this objection, what is posterior depends on what is prior; thus, if what is prior is removed, so too is what is posterior. Now, accidents are consequent upon substance; the removal of substance must therefore also involve the removal of the dependent accidents.<sup>57</sup> In reply, Thomas formulates his teaching in terms of his notion of God as first cause. It is true, he allows, that what is posterior is dependent on what is prior. But, the error of the objection is that it conceives the meaning of 'what is prior' too narrowly, in the sense of denoting only what is immediately prior. But, what is posterior is dependent not only on what is immediately prior, but also on what is ultimately prior to the existence of all, that is, on God, the cause of all things. Indeed, Thomas argues, every effect depends more on the first cause (God) than on secondary causes (in this instance, the substances of the bread and wine). Hence it is, for St. Thomas, that by the power of God (virtute Dei), who is the first cause of all things, it can come about that that which naturally

follows on something else can still remain when the latter is taken away.<sup>58</sup>

However, despite Thomas' frequent mention in the treatise on the Eucharist that real presence and other features of this sacrament consequent upon transubstantiation are dependent on divine activity,<sup>59</sup> only in a comparatively few passages has Aquinas actually sought to provide us with more detailed information about why the Eucharist must be primarily God's work. In an extremely important passage of this type,<sup>60</sup> Thomas introduces the necessity of God for achieving this conversion in the context of his analysis of the radicality of the Eucharistic change. For Aquinas, only formal change (i.e., of accidental or substantial form) is possible in the natural realm on account of the limitations of the (immediate) agents of natural change. As Thomas says, every agent is effective inasmuch as it is in act (omne agens agit inquantum est actu) and all created agents are limited in their act by being found in genus and species. Now, it is precisely by being determined by the forms which 'grant' them their actuality (and therefore the specific capacities to realize certain functions) that created agents are limited in their act. Thus (insofar as the effectiveness of every agent follows on its actuality), this is why all change in the natural world is merely formal: since these agents are actualized by their forms, the range of their own

causative activity, for Thomas, must be restricted to a (similar) simple changing of form. But (Thomas continues while referring to his teaching earlier in the Summa), God transcends the limitations of genus and species, for He is Himself 'infinite act'. Thus, God can cause more than the merely formal change found in nature: by virtue of the undetermined and completely actual quality of His being, His work can extend to the complete being of a thing, and thus He (and He alone) can effect the truly substantial change demanded in the sacramental conversion whereby not only the form, but even the matter of the bread and wine can be made into the form and matter of the body and blood of Christ.<sup>61</sup>

On the basis of this account of the conversion of substances achieved through the power of God, Thomas is enabled to offer in his discussion of the Eucharist a portrayal of real presence which emphasizes the non-spatial and incorporeal quality of Christ's existence under the species. Now, a thorough examination of Thomas' description of real presence in the light of his affirmation of substantial conversion is, of course, beyond the scope of the present study. But, some indication of the merit of this account can here be given by examining in particular Thomas' success in resolving or avoiding altogether the difficulties involved in the earlier interpretations of the sacrament. First, the understanding of Christ's

presence in this sacrament as a presence per modum substantiae<sup>62</sup> allows Aquinas to advance a realistic notion of Eucharistic presence without being forced to affirm a merely localized presence of Christ. For Aquinas, presence in place cannot directly be attributed to any substance considered in itself. Rather, in terms of the substantial entities found in the natural world, what is found in place is only one of the accidents of substance, the dimensive quantity, whose proper mode of existence consists in being commensurate with the dimensions of the place containing it.<sup>63</sup> But, since the accident which is in place in fact belongs to a substance, there is thus a secondary or indirect sense in which substance may legitimately be said to be located in place: for example, since its dimensions occupy a place, because the dimensive quantity inheres in the substance of the bread, through the medium of this accident this substance of the bread can be said, albeit only indirectly, to be in place. But, Thomas' understanding of the Eucharistic conversion as precisely a conversion of substance precludes even this secondary ascription of local presence on earth to the substances of the body and blood of Christ, for the accidents of the bread and wine which remain in existence after the conversion of their substances and which are in place by virtue of their own dependence on the dimensive quantity do not come to belong to the new

substances present in the sacrament as a concomitant result of substantial conversion. In other words, since these accidents do not now inhere in the substances of Christ's body and blood, there is thus no possibility of these substances being 'contained' in the place of the subsistent accidents. Instead, even in this secondary sense, there is only one locale in which the substances of Christ's body and blood can be said to be at all, in heaven, for it is there that the accidents of the body and blood, in their proper mode, are confined until the eschaton.<sup>64</sup> In turn, the non-local character of the presence of Christ in this sacrament (as distinct from that presence which he enjoys in heaven) also means that Thomas' conception of the purely substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist is compatible with the Catholic affirmation of the unceasing existence of the resurrected Lord in his natural being in heaven: since Christ's dimensions in their proper mode are not brought into contact with the sacramental species--and hence are not forced to 'evacuate' their heavenly abode--the substantial presence of Christ's body and blood occasioned by the celebration of the sacrament does not affect in any way Christ's continued local presence in heaven through the medium of his bodily dimensions.

This denial of a localized presence of Christ in the sacrament consequently also made possible Thomas'

avoidance of the specific problems entailed by the notion of physical presence. For Aquinas, in the light of his affirmation of presence per modum substantiae, little difficulty is posed by the objection, for example, that real presence is impossible for it would require a body of the magnitude possessed by Christ to be contained in the sacrament without exceeding the limits of the much smaller host. Referring to this analysis, Thomas points out that in actual fact, the notion of magnitude does not pertain to substance in itself. Instead, magnitude has to do with the accidents of a thing and in particular with that accident responsible for the extension of body and its relation to place. With regard to substance, however, the actual size of an entity does not affect at all the 'presence' of substance in that thing. As Thomas says in an attempt to explain this point, a small object realizes and reflects as fully as a larger one its own substance: thus, for example, the total nature of 'air' is as truly found in a large as in a small amount of air, and, human nature is equally present in the large and in the small man. Thus, since the entire nature of substance is as truly contained by small as by large dimensions (propria . . . totalitas substantiae continetur indifferenter in parva vel magna quantitate), given that Christ's bodily substance has actually succeeded that of the bread, it matters not that the dimensions of the host are lesser

in size than Christ's own: exactly as the entire substance of the bread was earlier present, Christ's entire substance can similarly be completely related to this smaller entity by the power of the consecration.<sup>65</sup> Likewise, the idea of the non-spatial and non-extended quality of substance in itself also permits Thomas to resolve in satisfactory fashion the related problem posed by the breaking of the host. Assuming a local presence, the problem formerly created by the breaking was whether the complete Christ thus can come to exist in each of the new fragments or, given his original co-extensiveness with the unbroken host, it is in fact only a part of Christ's body which is now found under each fragment. For Thomas, the breaking of the sacramental species does not alter Christ's complete substantial presence under each of the fragments. In this regard, Thomas again employs the idea that substance is wholly present in a thing regardless of its size. Substance is not co-extensive with its dimensions in the sense that one 'part' of substance is found in this part of the body, and another elsewhere. Rather, the whole substance is completely present under each part of the thing. This means, then, that for St. Thomas, just as the complete body of Christ is present in substantial form in the integral host, so too it is fully present substantially under each of the fragments.<sup>66</sup>

Finally, Thomas' resolution of the traditional

problems of Eucharistic theology in terms of the conversion of substance also provided the basis for the definitive establishment of the exact character of the terminus ad quem of this change. Occasioned in part by the perceived impropriety of allowing the possibility of inanimate objects such as bread and wine to be transformed into Christ's soul or his divinity, a certain degree of confusion had been insinuated into the preceeding tradition regarding the term of the Eucharistic conversion--it was not clear, for example, whether the divinity of Christ, as well as his humanity, could be present in this sacrament. Moreover, the words of institution could not clarify the situation, for Christ at the Last Supper had not specified the status of his divinity in terms of the sacrament after the consecration. On the basis of his doctrine of substantial conversion and especially the related notion of concomitance, however, Thomas was able to affirm the presence of the whole Christ, body, soul and divinity, in the Eucharist. The basic premise of the notion of concomitance is that in the case of things which are joined in reality, wherever one is, there too must be the other (si . . . aliqua duo sunt realiter conjuncta, ubicumque est unum realiter, oportet et aliud esse).<sup>67</sup>

Hence, although the accounts of institution were silent about the divinity and soul of Christ, since these are joined to Christ's body in reality, when the substance of



Christ's body begins to exist in the sacrament, so too must the other substances which contribute to the constitution of his being. But, Thomas adds, the various 'parts' of Christ must be conceived as present in the sacrament in different ways. We may understand as present in the Eucharist in a direct way only what is explicitly mentioned in the sacramental form; for this reason, Thomas states, the body and blood of Christ are present as the direct terms of the respective consecratory formulae of the Eucharist ex vi sacramenti. On the other hand, the other parts of Christ are not present as the direct term of either conversion but only insofar as they are naturally related to this direct term; hence, for Thomas, the divinity and soul of Christ come to be related to the sacramental species not ex vi sacramenti, but by concomitance, ex reali concomitantia.<sup>68</sup> Thus, although the different aspects of Christ's being are in this account conceived to be present in diverse ways, by this teaching Thomas definitively established the presence of the whole Christ in the sacrament of the altar.

Although the idea of concomitance did not originate with Aquinas, St. Thomas seems to have been the first to have extended this notion to include the accidents proper to the body and blood of Christ.<sup>69</sup> The legitimacy of this extension derives from the fact that Christ's bodily substance as it naturally exists in heaven does not exist

apart from its own accidental determinations. Thus, consistent with the understanding articulated in relation to the divinity of Christ, Thomas affirms that the accidents, as well as the substance, of Christ's body and blood, are present in the Eucharist after the consecration.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, in view of his consistent denial of localized presence, Thomas yet rejects the conclusion that the presence of Christ's accidents necessitates his physical presence in the sacrament. Such, indeed, would be the case, Thomas concedes, if the accidents were present as the direct term of the conversion: in this instance, they would be present in the mode proper to them, and hence, in particular, the dimensive quantity would be present in the way proper to it, that is, in place. But, the accidents of Christ's body and blood are not present as the direct term of the conversion, but only by virtue of their relation to their own substances. Inasmuch, then, as it is the substances of the body and blood which are present ex vi sacramenti, while their accidents are here only ex vi realis concomitantiae, Thomas concludes that the affirmation of the presence of these accidents does not entail the 'localization' of Christ in the Eucharist. Rather, since they are present only on account of their relation to substance, they are not present in the way proper to them (which would involve a presence in place). On the contrary, this presence 'by

concomitance' means that they are here present in a distinctive way, to be specific, in the way that is proper to substance itself. Thus, Thomas safeguards his basic insights into substantial presence, and, the actual presence of these accidents in the Eucharist, by the affirmation that the accidents of Christ's body are themselves present per modum substantiae.<sup>71</sup>

In the context of his teaching on substantial conversion and presence, Thomas has mentioned in a number of places his conviction of the importance of faith for the personal apprehension of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist: affirmation of the truth of real presence, argues St. Thomas, can be made only by the individual who accepts by faith God's revelation of Christ's Eucharistic presence.<sup>72</sup> Thomas' insistence on the necessity of faith for the knowledge of real presence becomes comprehensible in the light of his understanding of the manner in which man normally attains knowledge of reality.<sup>73</sup> For Aquinas, the starting-point of all human knowledge of reality is the perception of corporeal things through the senses. Now, as Aristotle had done before him, Thomas acknowledged two distinct 'sets' of senses by which man becomes acquainted with the things of the sensible world. In the first place, there are the five external senses which themselves possess a

twofold object: the 'proper sensibles,' which designate the sense-object proper to each external sense, e.g., colour for sight, sound for hearing, odours for smell; and, the so-called 'common sensibles,' which are sense objects perceived not by any one of the external senses, but by two or more of them, e.g., size, shape, motion and rest.<sup>74</sup> Secondly, Thomas postulates four internal senses, whose principal purpose is to synthesize and store the data obtained by the external senses. Thus, for example, the 'common' or 'general' sense has the task of collating the information provided by the outer senses, whereas the 'imagination' acts to conserve the sensible forms received by the senses. (In addition, the two other internal senses provide man with the ability to formulate and retain certain judgments about the value of sensible objects for himself. Hence, by the vis cogitativa, man has the power to apprehend that something is useful to him; and, by the vis memorativa, he furthermore is able to keep these apprehensions for further reference.)<sup>75</sup> The sense-perception of particular things thus gained through the external and internal senses, in turn, is extremely important for the intellectual knowledge of man for it serves as the basis of man's further penetration into the essence of things and of his knowledge of truth in general: that is, according to Aquinas, even for the knowledge of intelligible truth, the mind manifests an unceasing

dependence on the information proffered to it by the senses.<sup>76</sup> For Aquinas, however, the sensible images established and maintained through the activity of the imagination cannot be directly received by the mind which deals only with the universal; since these images are of particular things, they must be further refined for the mind to be able to apprehend their intelligible truth. Accordingly, Thomas posits an active power in the mind, the 'active intellect,' whose task it is to abstract and illuminate the universal element in these sensible images. But, once the active intellect has succeeded in isolating this universal aspect from its reference to the particular and corporeal, the universal concept thus abstracted can then be assimilated by the other principle of the mind, the 'passive intellect,' whose function is to be receptive (to be in potency) to the intelligible forms established by the work of the active intellect.<sup>77</sup>

In the light of the dependence of the mind on the information gathered by the senses, there are at least two reasons for Thomas' conclusion in the treatise on the Eucharist that the presence of Christ in the sacrament transcends man's capacity for knowledge even though 'substance' normally falls within the purview of the intellect.<sup>78</sup> For the intellectual apprehension of the true substances of the sacramental species, the mind would have to be provided with adequate sense information on

which to work. But, on the one hand, that which is perceivable by the senses can give no indication of the presence of the substances of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament. For Aquinas, as has been argued, by the decree of God the accidents of the bread and wine have been maintained in their normal existence, having been granted, moreover, the capacities to continue to do all that they formerly did. Thus, in this regard, the information provided by the senses is in itself correct,<sup>79</sup> for the appearances of the bread and wine actually do exist and still are able to modify adjacent sense organs. But, although the senses and the intellect are, strictly speaking, concerned with different things,<sup>80</sup> the fact that the senses are not deceived in this apprehension of the subsistent accidents, in turn, creates the possibility for error by the intellect in its knowledge of the truth implicit in these appearances: since it is through the accidents that the intellect judges the substance of anything,<sup>81</sup> and, moreover, since it is the appearances precisely of the bread and wine (and not of Christ) which are perceived, the mind might reasonably conclude that the objects here present remain, in truth, bread and wine. Thus, far from the intellect concluding naturally from the evidence of the senses the truth of Christ's substantial presence in the Eucharist, faith, in fact, must exercise a 'critical function' in preserving the intellect from

error in its apprehension of the sacramental substances: as Thomas says, although the proper object of the intellect is indeed substance, in the case of the substances of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, it is necessary that the intellect be preserved through faith from deception.<sup>82</sup>

On the other hand, the mind's correct apprehension of the actual substances in the sacrament after the consecration would moreover be dependent on the accidents of the body and blood of Christ themselves being present in the Eucharist in a visible way--only then could these accidents affect surrounding bodies so that they might be perceived by the external senses. But, as Thomas notes, the accidents of Christ's body and blood are not present in the sacrament in a way that is visible to the bodily eye.<sup>83</sup> Rather, inasmuch as these accidents are present in the sacrament only by a certain concomitance, they are here found in an 'invisible' and non-sensible form: that is, present ex vi realis concomitantiae, these accidents exist in the Eucharist not in the way proper to them (by virtue of which manner of existence they are within the grasp of the senses), but instead in the way proper to substance (which is itself, as has been stated, the proper object not of the senses, but of the intellect). It is for this reason, in turn, that Thomas argues in one passage<sup>84</sup> that the real presence of Christ

in the Eucharist is 'fitting' for it contributes to the perfection of Christian faith, which is concerned with both Christ's divinity and his humanity. Now, it is of the very essence of faith that it deals with unseen realities. Thus, Thomas says in this text, real presence can aid in the perfection of faith, for just as Christ offers his divinity to men in an invisible way for their belief, so also Christ offers his flesh invisibly in this sacrament to men for the same end (hoc competit perfectioni fidei, quae sicut est de divinitate Christi, ita est de eius humanitate . . . Et quia fides est invisibilium, sicut divinitatem nobis exhibet Christus invisibiliter, ita et in hoc sacramento carnem suam nobis exhibet invisibili modo). Thus, for these two reasons proposed on the basis of Thomas' conception of the nature of human knowledge--that the testimony of the senses to the continued existence of the original accidents is incompatible with the rational apprehension of the substances of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, and, that the existence of Christ's own accidents per modum substantiae precludes any possibility of attaining this presence through the powers of the unaided reason--Thomas concludes that the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a truth knowable by faith alone.

In addition to these strictly epistemological considerations, it appears that other, more basic facets



of his Eucharistic theory have contributed to Thomas' restriction of real presence to the realm of faith. The most important of these is Thomas' conception of the miraculous nature of substantial conversion and presence, as occurrences wholly dependent on the creative power of God to fulfill the promise of Christ to the faithful. Thus, in the treatise on the Eucharist, implicit in Thomas' assertion (in III, 75, 4c) that the Eucharistic conversion is entirely 'supernatural,' achieved purely by the power of God (conversio . . . est omnino supernaturalis, sola Dei virtute effecta), is the recognition that the supernatural quality of real presence causes it to be inaccessible to the natural powers of the mind.<sup>85</sup> This notion of the cruciality of the divine intervention in the sacrament for the determination of the importance of faith for real presence is also found in Thomas' earlier reference to the Eucharist in the treatise on faith.<sup>86</sup> In this article, Thomas is discussing whether the articles of faith, which describe the content of faith, are properly formulated. Now, earlier in this same question in the treatise on faith, Thomas had established the criteria for the separation of the matters of faith into distinct articles: there is a particular article of faith wherever there is something unseen about God--this may have to do with either the nature of God himself or the means of attaining God--for some distinct

reason,<sup>87</sup> that is, a distinct article is devoted to a specific matter of faith whenever the ground of not knowing this truth is a particular difficulty or obscurity associated exclusively with this truth. Thus, in the corpus of the present article, Thomas concludes that the articles of faith are indeed well-formulated for the articles of the creed describe adequately each of the various truths about both the hidden being of the divinity, and, the mystery of Christ's humanity (the means of salvation), which pose peculiar difficulties for belief. But, the sixth objection of this article dissents from this opinion: if a truth of faith is to be affirmed in articular form on account of a special difficulty (specialis difficultas) associated only with that truth, then the articles of faith are not well-formulated, for there should thus be a special article devoted to the Eucharist, which presents a special obscurity over that of the other truths of faith. In response (ad 6), Thomas in effect denies that the distinctiveness of the Eucharist among the sacraments of the New Law is sufficient to warrant specific mention of the Eucharist in the articles of the creed. In the first place, as a sacrament, the Eucharist does not pose a particular problem for belief: just as the other sacramental means of sanctification are not mentioned individually, so too the Eucharist, considered as a source of grace and life, is not mentioned explicitly, being instead

understood along with the other sacraments of the New Law as implicit in the article describing God's sanctifying work.<sup>88</sup> Secondly, continues Aquinas, neither does the unique feature of this sacrament, the real presence of Christ, demand explicit mention of the Eucharist in the creed. Now, Thomas notes here, Christ is contained in the sacrament miraculously (miraculose ibi corpus Christi continetur). Thus, the Eucharist is not mentioned explicitly, for its unknowability does not rest on a 'special difficulty.' Rather, just as all other miracles (sicut et omnia alia miracula), since real presence can occur only on the basis of God's work in the sacrament, the Eucharist is included implicitly under the article affirming the omnipotence of God (sic concluditur sub omnipotentia). From this discussion earlier in the Summa, although Thomas does not directly develop this insight in the later treatise on the Eucharist itself (aside from those few references mentioned above in which this notion is implicit), it is clear that Thomas thus considered faith in real presence as more or less an example of a more general confidence in the power of God to achieve all that He wills.

In articulating his conception of the centrality of faith for the personal ascertainment of real presence, Thomas stresses in the treatise on the Eucharist that this faith is occasioned and informed by the testimony of Christ himself to his presence in the sacrament: since the truth

of real presence ultimately remains a mystery transcending the understanding, Thomas argues that only on the basis of Christ's words proclaimed over the elements in the consecration that man by faith can discover the true import of the sacramental species. Now, in the first instance, this means that the words of Christ establish the content of this faith: by his words, faith knows that by God's power, what was formerly bread is now the body of Christ. But, secondly, it also means that the faith created by Christ's promise of his presence constitutes the personal response of man to God in Christ revealing this truth: that is, real presence is believed precisely because it is Christ himself who proposes this truth for man's belief. Both aspects of the act of faith in real presence are summarized by Thomas in the first article in the treatise on the Eucharist in which he addresses directly the question of real presence: states St. Thomas, 'we could never know by our senses that the real body of Christ and his blood are in this sacrament, but only by our faith which is based on the authority of God' (. . . verum corpus Christi et sanguinem esse in hoc sacramento, sensu deprehendi potest, sed sola fide, quae auctoritati divinae innititur).<sup>89</sup> As one might expect, the Thomistic focus in this text on faith's dependence on the word of God echoes Thomas' earlier teaching in his treatise on faith in the Summa. In the very first article of this treatise,<sup>90</sup> Thomas considers whether the 'first truth' (prima veritas), that is, God, is the object of faith. Now, in the corpus of

this article, Thomas notes that as a cognitive habit, two aspects of the object of faith may be distinguished. On the one hand, there is that which is believed, the 'material object' of faith (materiale objectum). With regard to faith's material object, God is not the sole object of faith, for many other things--for example, as ad 1 of the present article observes, the matters about Christ's humanity, or, the sacraments--are proposed for man's belief. But, Thomas adds, these other matters are included in the content of faith only insofar as they have some reference to God: Christ's humanity and sacraments are acknowledged in faith because they form the 'workings of God; by which He aids man in obtaining salvation. Thus, in this secondary sense, by virtue of the reference of these matters to God, the material object of faith indeed can be said to be about the 'first truth.'<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, there is that on the basis of which the truths of faith are believed, the 'formal objective' of faith (formalis ratio objecti). For example, in a science, the 'formal objective' is the medium of demonstration through which the conclusions are known. With regard to faith's 'formal objective', argues Aquinas, God alone serves as the object of faith, for it is only because God reveals the truths of faith that the assent of faith actually occurs--faith rests wholly on the divine truth as the medium of its assent (non . . . fides . . . assentit alicui nisi quia est a Deo revelatum, unde ipsi veritati

divinae fides innititur tanquam medio).<sup>92</sup> Thus, Thomas' later affirmation that faith in real presence is based on the authority of God constitutes an attempt to relate this aspect of the role of faith in the Eucharist to his more general analysis of faith.

It also seems likely that an additional role must be ascribed to faith with regard to the real presence, one which is suggested by Thomas' affirmation, in the treatise on the sacraments, of the function which the 'faith of the Church' (fides Ecclesiae) performs in the proper celebration of the sacraments. The first task that confronts us in the effort to determine the import of this 'faith of the Church,' however, is deciding whether this faith actually can play any role in the offering of this particular sacrament. This necessity is imposed on us by the fact that the phrase 'fides Ecclesiae' used in terms of the consecration of the sacraments does not appear in the treatise on the Eucharist itself. Instead, Thomas employs this phrase, in the sense which here concerns us, only in the treatise on the sacraments in general. Thus, there exists the possibility that the distinctive characteristics of the Eucharist preclude the involvement of the 'faith of the Church' in insuring the proper consecration of the elements: that is, since Christ himself is present in this sacrament, while only his power is conveyed through the others, it may well be that the absence of the phrase from Thomas' account of the Eucharist signifies its

inapplicability to this sacrament. At first glance, there is much which seems to favor this interpretation. Most significantly, an examination of Thomas' language in the treatise on the Eucharist reveals that he is careful to emphasize that the priest in the consecration of this sacrament acts solely, as it were, as the representative of Christ: when the priest pronounces the words of consecration over the species, it is as if Christ himself were performing this act, for the priest here is working in persona Christi.<sup>93</sup> The repeated affirmation that the priest effects the Eucharistic conversion only by virtue of his authorization by Christ, in his ordination, to act in Christ's stead,<sup>94</sup> contrasts markedly with the language with which Thomas describes other features of the priest's role in the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus, for example, in an article in which Thomas considers whether the mass of a bad priest is worth less than that of a good priest, Thomas distinguishes two aspects of the priest's role in the mass.<sup>95</sup> On the one hand, it is the duty of the priest to consecrate the Eucharist, and in this sense, there clearly can be no difference between the offerings of the good and of the bad priest: since they both act in persona Christi, as long as they possess the proper intention (see below in the text), their sacraments are worth the same. On the other hand, in the mass the priest also offers the prayers of the people to God. With regard

to the value of these prayers, two points must be made. Insofar as the personal devotion of the priest affects his prayer, clearly the prayers of the bad priest are inferior to those of the more devout priest. But, in saying the prayers of the mass, the priest is serving on behalf of the people: acting in this sense as the personification of the Church, the priest offers these prayers in persona totius Ecclesiae.<sup>96</sup> Thus, Thomas says, since both kinds of priest equally personify the Church, the prayers of the morally inferior priest must be the same value as those of the good priest. On the basis of this language contrasting work done in persona Christi, and, in persona Ecclesiae, then, it appears that Thomas indeed wishes to deny any role to the Church in the realization of Christ's presence in the sacrament.

Nevertheless, further reflection discloses that Thomas' differentiation of in persona Christi from in persona Ecclesiae with reference to the activity of the priest in the mass does not deny in any way the applicability of fides Ecclesiae to the offering of the Eucharist. True enough, Thomas' language in the treatise on the Eucharist is often designed to underscore the difference between the Eucharist and the other sacraments of the New Law: whereas the others simply convey the power of Christ to the Church, through the Eucharist, Christ himself is granted to his people. But, this stress on the uniqueness



of the Eucharist does not cause Thomas even to imply that the other sacraments have an inferior relation to Christ or that they work from a power other than Christ's (as if these sacraments did not enjoy equal status with the Eucharist as Christ's means by which he works for the sanctification and strengthening of the community of believers). Rather, as was observed in the first chapter, not only the Eucharist, but all the sacraments of the New Law are dependent on Christ for both their efficacy and realization. Thus, in this sense, they all belong to Christ as to their principal agent: as Thomas says at one point in the treatise on the sacraments, the personal morality of the priest is irrelevant to the question of sacramental validity, for in the sacraments, the minister acts only as the instrument of Christ--it is Christ who himself is active in achieving the sacrament.<sup>97</sup> This means, then, that the distinction between in persona Christi and in persona Ecclesiae advanced in reference to the prayers said in the mass simply does not refer (even indirectly) to the uniqueness of this sacrament among the sacraments of the New Law: since all the sacraments are wrought by the power of Christ, in the others, the priest too works 'in the person of Christ.' Nor, more importantly, do the innate distinctiveness of the Eucharist, and, the language opposing persona Christi and persona Ecclesiae in the treatise on the Eucharist, justify

removing this sacrament, in our interpretation of it, from its basically ecclesiological setting. Strictly speaking, it is true that the sacraments are Christ's alone. But, the agent of Christ's saving activity in the world is his Church. This identification of the secondary role of the Church in the realization of the sacraments, in turn, permits St. Thomas legitimately to call these sacraments, not only the 'sacraments of Christ's humanity,' but even the 'sacraments of the Church,' (sacramenta Ecclesiae).<sup>98</sup> The valid ascription of all seven sacraments to the Church in this way thus establishes in general terms the appropriateness of attributing to the Church the same activity in the Eucharist as it enjoys in the celebration of the other sacraments: since Thomas perceives a place for the fides Ecclesiae in the proper observance of the sacraments in general, inasmuch as Thomas has not explicitly disavowed the contribution of this fides to the realization of this sacrament on the grounds of the uniqueness of the Eucharist, we are therefore not prevented from discerning the manifestation of this faith of the Church in the observance of the Eucharist itself.

The conviction that the faith of the Church is present in the celebration of the Eucharist despite the absence of any statement to this effect in the treatise on the Eucharist is confirmed by the recognition that the

problem to which Thomas' invocation of the concept of fides Ecclesiae is addressed in the treatise on the sacraments is also present in the offering of the Eucharist itself. In the treatise on the sacraments, St. Thomas introduces the idea of the 'faith of the Church' in his discussion of the faith (or lack of it) of the celebrant of the sacraments.<sup>99</sup> Now, in the earlier articles of this question, Thomas had determined that for the valid celebration of the sacraments, a properly ordained minister (who had been granted in his ordination the power to act in the place of Christ) capable of expressing the intention to offer the particular sacrament for the purpose for which it is intended, is required.<sup>100</sup> Thus, in light of this earlier determination, in the present article Thomas consistently concludes that the faith of the individual priest is in fact not required for the valid sacrament: as long as he can still form the intention to consecrate the sacrament for the reasons for which it was instituted, as far as his contribution is concerned, even the sacrament of the unbelieving priest is valid and complete. In terms of the priest who has lost his own faith, then, the fact of the absence of his personal faith does not affect sacramental validity: though itself detached from, and not issuing out of, a living faith, by virtue of his recognition of the meaning and intent of the sacrament (which meaning and intent is preserved by the teaching of

the Church), as the delegate of the Church charged with responsibility for offering the sacrament,<sup>101</sup> his correct intention alone is sufficient to guarantee validity. It is not difficult, of course, to discover the rationale behind this rather 'minimal' definition of the responsibilities of the priest. The people depend on the sacraments as important means of grace and of contact with the risen Lord. Now, a requirement that the celebrant himself be a faithful and loving disciple of Christ manifesting the love of God in his own life could only be the occasion of doubt and concern for the faithful: in this case, how might they be certain that they were in fact receiving valid sacraments from a priest whose moral character and personal faith were uncertain? Hence, the desire to insure the serenity of the faithful, coupled with the basic conviction that the sacraments are inherently the work of Christ, has issued in Thomas' declaration of the minimal demands on the person of the priest in the sacraments: to offer a valid sacrament, all the priest himself must 'provide' is the intention which discloses his own willingness to serve here as the visible agent of Christ's action for his people.

But, despite the insistence on the irrelevance of the personal faith of the minister for sacramental validity, Thomas yet stresses in this same article that faith is in fact required for the correct celebration of the sacraments:

if the priest himself is not a believing member of the Church, then, for the sacrament to be perfected, the faith of the Church must yet be present in some sense in the offering.<sup>102</sup> The necessity of faith in this regard derives from the essential character of the institution appointed to act for Christ in the world. As was argued in the first chapter, Thomas' basic definition of the Church is that it is the 'congregation of the faithful.' In the first instance, this means that the Church is constructed from those who have been drawn to God by faith in Christ. But, secondly, this also means that faith must characterize the work of the Church in the world on Christ's behalf. Now, the principal function of the Church is to make available the grace and power of the sacraments: Christ offers these beneficial gifts to his people through the visible and historical activity of the Church obeying Christ's command to observe the sacraments. Thus, given the essential nature of the Church, in the observance of the sacraments, the Church's work must manifest its own faithfulness to the will of Christ. This is why, then, Thomas cannot be content to dismiss faith entirely as irrelevant to the question of sacramental causality: when the priest himself lacks faith, Thomas argues that the faith of the Church fills the gap, insuring that the proper context is established for the sanctification of Christ's people by grounding the intention of the unbelieving

priest in the faith which completes its meaning. This 'faith of the Church,' of course, does not represent a Thomistic hypostatization of an impersonal entity which Thomas has endowed with attributes and powers appropriate only to men. Rather, the 'faith of the Church' denotes that true faith in Christ and about him, based on God's word, shared and expressed by all those who perceive in Christ God's decisive saving act for the world. This is suggested by an important text in the treatise on faith where Thomas has had occasion to refer to the nature of fides Ecclesiae: for Thomas, this faith is 'living faith,' faith formed by love, the faith, that is, that dominates the existence of all those whose being has been transformed by their faith in God in Christ and who now live in the new community of those centred in Christ.<sup>103</sup> It is this faith, then, that constitutes the final requirement for sacramental validity, for from the faith of the entire Church arises its own intention to offer Christ's sacraments as he willed, which intention the representative of the Church and Christ, the individual priest, himself must affirm to assure sacramental validity.

Applied to the Eucharist, the faith of the Church guarantees the context required for the proper celebration of this sacrament of Christ's presence in the world.<sup>104</sup> On the one hand, the greater dignity of the Eucharist results in Thomas' constant stress in the treatise on the

Eucharist on the purely subordinate role of the priest in the sacrament: since the consecration entails the presence of Christ under the species, the task of the priest is restricted to speaking the words of Christ, with the proper intention, in persona Christi. But, on the other hand, the very possibility of any priest acting for Christ is consequent upon his relation, in some way, to the Church which forms the main vehicle of Christ's ministry in the world. First, this means that the validity of the sacrament and the actualization of Christ's presence on the altar depend on the ability of the priest to acknowledge and express the intention of the Church to act as the Lord commanded, to offer this sacrament 'in memory of me.' Thus, for valid consecration, Thomas insists that the priest must himself always express the Church's intention to use the Eucharist for the actualization of Christ's presence in the world and for the sanctification of the Church. Secondly, however, the faithful priest is a more perfect representative of the Church in the achievement of God's will for his people: since the ministry of the Church arises from its faithfulness to God, just as the intention of the Church to serve Christ is rooted in the faith which creates the Church, so too the intention of this priest to fulfill the will of Christ by consecrating the species will similarly be dependent on the personal faith which he shares with the other

members of the Christian community. In this sense, therefore, in the offering of the Eucharist, the believing priest serves not only as the conduit of the intention of the Church, but also as the embodiment of the very faith of the Church which leads it to obey Christ's command. But, aware that not all priests who remain within the historical Church have been preserved in faith, Thomas allows that the personal faith of the minister is not absolutely required for the valid sacrament: as long as he still can formulate the correct intention, his Eucharist bestows grace and, most importantly, realizes the presence in the sacrament promised by Christ to the disciples. But, faith must always inform the activity of the Church. Hence, in place of the faith of the priest, Thomas posits the faith of the Church: since by definition the Church must offer faithful service, the defects of the priest are overcome by the faith of the entire Church which proclaims its confidence in the word of God in offering this sacrament. Thus, in addition to the faith needed to acknowledge real presence, it would seem that the faith of the Church is also required to preserve the proper character of the Church's service to Christ in the very realization of this presence of Christ in the sacrament.<sup>105</sup>



## CHAPTER THREE

### Faith and the Eucharistic Benefits

In the light of his conviction that real presence constitutes the distinguishing characteristic of the Eucharist, in his discussion of the benefits granted to the members of the Church through this sacrament,<sup>1</sup> Thomas offers a somewhat modified version of the source of the grace and other gifts obtained through the reception of the Eucharist. Thus, for example, in the passage in which he first explicitly argues that grace is in fact bestowed by this sacrament,<sup>2</sup> Thomas isolates and affirms two causes of Eucharistic grace. On the one hand, Thomas states, the Eucharist offers men grace for the same reason that the other sacraments of the New Law contribute to human sanctification, because of its close relationship to the Passion of Christ: since the Eucharist signifies the Passion at various levels, just as the other sacraments, so the Eucharist too conveys the power occasioned by God's work in Christ on the cross.<sup>3</sup> But, on the other hand, in the same text, in dependence on his earlier teaching on substantial conversion, Thomas has specified a second source of grace which is unique to this sacrament, the very presence in the Eucharist of the Christ who

himself is the centre and source of all Christian life.

Hence, in this regard, Thomas here draws a parallel between the Eucharist and the Incarnation<sup>4</sup>: we may conclude on the basis of real presence that the Eucharist grants grace, for 'just as by coming to men sacramentally he causes the life of grace' in those who encounter Christ worthily in this sacrament.<sup>5</sup> Thus, as suggested by this text, in keeping with his preoccupation in the treatise on the Eucharist with the distinctive feature of this sacrament, Thomas has discerned in Christ's real presence, and the consequent possibility of meeting Christ himself in this sacrament, a second, unique cause of the benefits of this particular sacrament of -the New Law.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the grace offered to men through the Eucharist on account of both real presence and the relation of this sacrament to the Passion, Thomas posits other beneficial effects of Eucharistic reception. Now, as was mentioned in the first chapter, Thomas sometimes calls the Eucharist, the 'sacrament of charity.'<sup>7</sup> In the first place, Aquinas justifies this name by observing that this sacrament, in which Christ has for his people and which will be consummated in the final vision.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, as will shortly be stressed, confirmation of the appropriateness of this designation is found in the fact that the actual attainment of the effects of this sacrament presupposes the individual's union to Christ through love. But, it is a third feature of the

importance of love for the Eucharist which especially discloses the aptness of this title. For St. Thomas, the Eucharist is pre-eminently the 'sacrament of charity' because through its proper reception, the love of the individual for God and Christ is stimulated and increased: assuming that the recipient already stands in a relationship of love with God, the effect of the Eucharist is to deepen this love by actualizing even more completely his potential for loving God through Christ.<sup>9</sup> According to Aquinas, this gift of love through the Eucharist affects the recipient in at least two dimensions of his existence. First, Thomas argues, the perfection of the believer's love through contact with Christ in this sacrament significantly modifies his personal being, for the experience of Christ's love can occasion the complete forgiveness of the individual's venial sins. In the case of the recipient who fulfills all the requirements for worthy reception, communion is a source of great joy: to one eating the sacrament with the proper spiritual disposition, the Lord grants that 'certain actual refreshment of spiritual sweetness' (quaedam actualis refectio spiritualis dulcedinis) which is inherent in Christ's loving embrace of those faithful to him.<sup>10</sup> In turn, this experience at the spiritual level of the vivifying and refreshing power of Christ's love arouses a new and more powerful fervor in the individual's own love,<sup>11</sup> a fervor which, in Thomas' analysis, is

most appropriately expressed in his prosecution of those acts aut-entically consistent with the love of God: as Thomas states at one point, the infusion of love in the spiritual reception of Christ in the Eucharist is manifested directly in acts issuing out of this newly-gained love.<sup>12</sup> With this appreciation of the 'behavioural' implications of Eucharistic reception, Thomas can thus quite reasonably proceed to argue that the remittance of one's venial sins is consequent to reception. In his estimation, venial sins serve to disrupt, to a degree, the devotion of the individual to God, thus interfering with the desire of the individual to act in a way pleasing to God. But, since Eucharistic reception entails the rekindling of the believer's fervour, Thomas concludes that the gift of love in this sacrament, which directly affects his activity, allows the recipient to 'shake off' thereby the effects of his former sin.<sup>13</sup>

But, despite the obvious personal value of the forgiveness of sins on account of the gift of love, for Aquinas it is the second consequence of the bestowal of love through the Eucharist which is the more important. As has already been argued, according to Aquinas, the Church is constructed from those who have accepted in faith and love the work of Christ as the source of their spiritual existence: by justifying or living faith, men are united with God through Christ in the new community of

the Church. That the worthy reception of the Eucharist actualizes a stronger love of God thus allows Thomas to ascribe an ecclesiological and communal dimension to Eucharistic reception: since contact with Christ stimulates the love of believers, for Thomas the most significant effect of worthy reception is the fortification and enhancement of the Church itself.<sup>14</sup> Thomas' conviction of the importance of this sacrament for the maintenance and development of the Church is reflected in his use of the traditional sacramental formulae, sacramentum tantum, res et sacramentum, and, res tantum.<sup>15</sup> In Aquinas' analysis, the sacramentum tantum or sign-quality of the Eucharist is constituted by the sacramental species, the bread and wine, which proclaim symbolically not only different aspects of the mystery of salvation, but especially the body and blood of Christ himself.<sup>16</sup> The res et sacramentum of the Eucharist, in turn, is the true body of Christ (corpus Christi verum), whose presence is realized in the sacrament through the proper deployment of the sacramental signs.<sup>17</sup> But, the relatively few references to the res tantum in the treatise on the Eucharist are a bit confusing, at least at first, for in different passages, Thomas defines the res tantum of the Eucharist in at least two different ways. On the one hand, he argues that the 'final effect' of the Eucharist is charity, for sacramental reception involves the

stimulation of the believer's love of Christ.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, Thomas states that the res tantum of this sacrament is the 'mystical body of Christ' (corpus Christi mysticum), that is, the true community of those who are saved, and united to God, through Christ.<sup>19</sup> In view of the importance of love to the creation of the Church, of course, the initial confusion occasioned by Thomas' equation in different passages of the res tantum of the Eucharist with charity, and, the mystical body, respectively, recedes: since love constitutes the essential bond of the members of the Church to Christ, and, to others in community with Christ, Thomas can legitimately conclude, on the basis of the gift of love through contact with the 'true body of Christ' in this sacrament, that the res tantum of the Eucharist, its ultimate effect, is in fact the perfection of the mystical body of Christ itself.

Corresponding to the various spiritual effects bestowed by Christ through the Eucharist, Thomas argues that a correct spiritual disposition is required on the part of the recipient for worthy and fruitful reception of this sacrament. Now, in the light of the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist and Thomas' frequent description of the Eucharistic Christ as the 'spiritual food' of Christians,<sup>20</sup> there is (perhaps) a natural tendency to view the reception of the benefits of this sacrament as

being more or less analogous, or even equivalent, to the process of physical nourishment: the believer eats and drinks Christ himself substantially present under the form of bread and wine, who causes in him spiritual life, just as physical food once eaten is incorporated into a man and revives his physical being. But, such a conception of the manner in which the believer appropriates to himself Christ's spiritual offering is incompatible with the doctrine of St. Thomas, for at least two reasons. In the first place, physical nutrition for Aquinas is itself an example of change: as Thomas writes in one place in the treatise on the Eucharist, in the context of the examination of the miraculous capacity of the subsistent accidents to continue to nourish,<sup>21</sup> nourishing is the act of the matter of food, which takes on the form of the one who is nourished, while the form of the food recedes. Hence, if the reception of Christ and his gifts in this sacrament was strictly analogous to the nutritive process, it would be necessary for Christ to become implicated in this process of change. But, the condition of the risen Lord precludes the possibility of his involvement in any change--the incorruptibility of Christ after the resurrection means that he can no longer be affected in this way,<sup>22</sup> and thus the reception of Christ in this sacrament differs fundamentally from nutrition.

More conclusively, however, the very mode of

Christ's presence in this sacrament makes it impossible that the bestowal of the spiritual goods consequent upon real presence can occur in the same way as the maintenance of physical life through nutrition. In III, 81, 3, Thomas discusses whether at the institution of this sacrament, Christ gave the disciples his body in passible form. At first glance, this would seem to be the case, for the Last Supper clearly preceded the resurrection, and hence Christ would seem to have given his disciples his body as it was before his ascent into heaven, that is, as passible and prone to change. But, notes Thomas in the corpus of this article, although it is true that Christ's body at the time of the Supper was passible, the nature of Eucharistic presence eliminates the possibility of Christ's presence in the sacrament at any time--before or after the resurrection--in a passible way. In the last chapter, there was occasion to observe Thomas' application of the concept of concomitantia to the problem posed by the accidents of Christ's own body and blood: there, it was noted that for St. Thomas, these accidents are not in the sacrament in the way proper to them, i.e., in visible form and as related to the place containing them, but rather in the way proper to substance, i.e., non-spatially and in a 'spiritual' manner. Now, for change to occur, the body which is changed must come in contact with the factors acting on it. Since, therefore, the



body and blood of Christ are not related to their surroundings after the consecration by their own dimensions, whereby bodies touch, but only by the medium of the (foreign) accidents of the bread and wine, even at the Last Supper the impassible mode of Christ's Eucharistic presence meant that Christ himself was not ingested or digested by the disciples--instead, then as now, only the sacramental species undergo any change at all.<sup>23</sup> Hence, in addition to the impassible quality of Christ's resurrected body, the actual character of this sacramental presence necessitates that we view the conveyance of the benefits of Christ through the Eucharist as inherently different from the nutritive process--despite language which may suggest at times a basic equation between physical nutrition and 'eating Christ,'<sup>24</sup> Christians do not eat and 'digest' (spiritually or otherwise) the Christ here present, thereby assimilating the power which he offers.

The inappropriateness of conceiving the relation between the Eucharistic Christ and man in terms of nutrition clearly suggests, in turn, that we must be careful not to take too literally the 'food' imagery pervading the treatise on the Eucharist. Quite apart from the considerations already mentioned, the literal reading of Thomas' language can only serve to dislodge this sacrament from its spiritual context (see below in the text) and locate it on a purely physical level at which the spiritual

quality of the recipient would become a matter of indifference. Rather, the value of this language comparing Christ to food is that it successfully denotes the essential dependence of man on the Lord: just as men rely on physical food for natural life, so contact with the risen Lord through this sacrament is necessary to 'sustain, nourish, refresh',<sup>25</sup> their life at the spiritual level. This, in fact, is the very point which St. Thomas wishes to make in an important passage in which he explicitly warns his readers to observe carefully the difference between 'spiritual' and 'physical' food. In an article early in this treatise,<sup>26</sup> Thomas is discussing whether the actual reception of the Eucharist is necessary for salvation. The second objection of this article concludes that it is: since the Eucharist constitutes the Church's 'spiritual food,' just as physical food benefits a man only when it is actually ingested, so spiritual food must be actually eaten and incorporated into one's being to be of any value to men. In reply, Thomas points out that the error of this objection is that it has allowed its knowledge of physical nutrition to misdirect its analysis of the character of the human contact with the Lord in this sacrament. There is, says Aquinas, at least one basic difference between physical and spiritual food. Bodily food is changed into the substance of the person who eats it. Thus, it works to

conserve the life only of that person who actually has physically consumed it. But, on the other hand, this does not occur in the case of 'spiritual food': spiritual food is not actually incorporated into the being of the recipient. On the contrary, as Thomas says, recalling here his teaching on the importance of the Eucharist to the maintenance of the Church, spiritual food instead changes man into itself (alimentum spirituale convertit hominem in seipsum), that is, receiving (the true body of) Christ in this sacrament allows the recipient to be incorporated more completely into (the mystical body of) Christ (. . . aliquis in Christum mutari et ei incorporari . . .). Thus, since incorporation into Christ is basically a spiritual occurrence, Thomas concludes this discussion by stating that as long as the recipient displays the appropriate spiritual disposition, he may in fact receive the benefits of this sacrament apart from the reception of the species--fruitful communion, in other words, does not itself require any physical action on the communicant's part.<sup>27</sup>

The section of Thomas' teaching on the Eucharist in which he most successfully underscores the primarily spiritual character of 'eating Christ' in a fruitful way, however, is that constituted by his examination of the two kinds of 'eating' which are in fact found in this sacrament, 'sacramental' and 'spiritual' eating. For

Aquinas, the term 'sacramental eating' (sacramentalis manducatio) describes the physical act of receiving the sacrament (=sign), the sacramental species.<sup>28</sup> Now, as should be apparent by this point in our discussion, the eating of species does not itself entail the concomitant fruitful eating of the Eucharistic Christ--as has been argued, the nature of Christ's sacramental presence, for example, means that the Christ present after the conversion of the substances is not accessible to a merely physical encounter. But, since the correct offering of the bread and wine ensures the substantial presence of the Lord in the sacrament, the conversion of substances actually establishes a new relation between the resurrected Lord and the consecrated species, so that the host now stands as a sign revealing the new presence of Christ to his Church. This means, then, that when the individual in turn takes the host to himself, because of Christ's real presence under the host, his act of physical eating also establishes some type of new 'contact' between him and the Eucharistic Christ:<sup>29</sup> 'sacramental eating', in other words, brings the recipient into some undefined (by Thomas) form of encounter with the substantially present Christ.<sup>30</sup>

But, even though it makes Christ available to all recipients of the sacramental species regardless of their personal spiritual worth, sacramental eating considered

in itself is insufficient to guarantee the reception of the spiritual goods which Christ offers his members through the Eucharist. As was stated in the first chapter, St. Thomas consistently argues in his sacramental theology for the necessity of appropriate spiritual qualities in the recipients of the sacraments--the idea that the conveyance of God's grace can be a 'mechanistic' affair in which the mere completion or offering of a sacrament is sufficient to ensure the efficacious granting of grace to any particular individual is completely absent from St. Thomas' thought. Rather, as was there noted, for those who are themselves capable of such acts, the reception of sacramental grace (as that of extra-sacramental grace), is realized only by those who employ the sacrament as the opportunity of expressing their love and faith in Christ. For Aquinas, despite its distinctiveness, this requirement, derived from his understanding of grace as God's means of completing and re-orientating the being of those who trust in God, applies as much to the celebration of the Eucharist as to the observance of the other sacraments of the New Law. Now, Thomas was quite aware that many undoubtedly approach the altar and receive the consecrated host while lacking the appropriate spiritual disposition: for these, the desire to receive has not arisen from a faith in Christ which yearns for renewed contact with the Lord. Thus, in terms of the unworthy reception of this sacrament,

Thomas reintroduces, in a specifically Eucharistic context, his typical distinction between the offer of the sacramental gifts, on the one hand, and, the actual attainment of these gifts, on the other,<sup>31</sup> and argues, moreover, that the two forms of eating in this sacrament conform to one or the other stages in the gift of the Eucharistic benefits. In the first place, as has been said, he confines 'sacramental eating' to the physical act of receiving the sacrament--sacramental eating does not itself issue in the personal appropriation of grace, but rather establishes, as it were, the possibility of this personal appropriation, for it brings Christ, the giver of the Eucharistic benefits, into a proximate relation with the recipient.<sup>32</sup> But, Thomas continues, the actual reception of these gifts, resulting from the fruitful contact between the believer and the source of his life, demands that this 'sacramental eating' be completed by a second form of 'eating,' 'spiritual eating' (spiritualis manducatio), by which the recipient approaches the Christ presented to him by the consecrated species in such a way as to derive new life and power from this encounter: in this sense, 'spiritual eating' defines a spiritual movement of the recipient, parallel to the physical act of eating, which allows him to obtain the sacramental benefits.<sup>33</sup> Thus, as Thomas writes in one place in which he wishes to stress the basically spiritual character of receiving Christ in the

sacrament, fruitful reception of the Eucharist is dependent on the personal expression of faith in the saving power of Christ here present under the species--spiritual eating, Thomas states, is 'to believe unto Christ with the desire of receiving the sacrament' (credit in<sup>34</sup>  
Christum cum desiderio sumendi hoc sacramentum).<sup>35</sup>

Elsewhere in the treatise on the Eucharist, Thomas has written in greater detail about the various spiritual qualities required for fruitful communion. First and foremost, as suggested by the preceding definition of spiritual eating as 'believing unto Christ,' Thomas insists on the presence of faith in the individual for the beneficial encounter of Christ in the sacrament: only on the basis of the faith that Christ is the true centre of authentic existence can the members of the Church gather to themselves the fruits of the Eucharist. Hence, as was noted at the conclusion of the first chapter, one of the reasons advanced by Aquinas for permitting the phrase 'mystery of faith' to remain in the consecratory form of the wine is that faith constitutes, in general, the appropriate human response to the justifying love of God manifested in the person and, especially, the activity of Christ: hence, since the Eucharist itself both proclaims Christ's passion and makes Christ himself available to the Church, faith here too must form an integral part of the recipient's use of the sacramental species.<sup>36</sup> Later

in the treatise on the Eucharist, Thomas has further emphasized the importance of human faith for the actual attainment of Christ and his gifts in this sacrament specifically in the context of his attempt to explicate the precise nature of spiritual eating. Hence, in III, 80, 2, in which Thomas seeks to determine whether it is for man alone to eat this sacrament spiritually, Aquinas emphasizes that faith always is required of man, in every aspect of his spiritual existence in the present life, for fruitful encounter with God and Christ. As Thomas observes in the corpus, the angels, like men, eat Christ spiritually. But, though they thus also live from Christ, Thomas nevertheless denies that the angels therefore eat the sacrament spiritually: in their experience of Christ, they need not approach him through the medium of signs, for they are capable of 'feeding on him' directly through manifest vision (visio manifesta). The possibility of such manifest vision, however, transcends the capacity of man in the present life: rather than possessing Christ immediately in clear vision, in their knowledge of him, as of other spiritual values, men see Christ, in the words of the Apostle, only indirectly and 'as in a glass darkly.' This means, in the first place, that personal acquaintance with the risen Christ for man-on-the-way is confined to the sacramental sphere: although what the angels now possess, men will attain in heaven (see below in the



text), for the present, encounter with the resurrected Lord is possible only through the mediating power of this sacrament. Hence, as Thomas says later in the same article,<sup>37</sup> it is for man alone to eat the sacrament spiritually, for the sacrament, which conveys the spiritual to men through objects more readily accessible to them, conforms to the present potential precisely of men for attaining spiritual truth. But, secondly, as Thomas also stresses,<sup>38</sup> this similarly necessitates that the 'personal acquaintance' with Christ through this sacrament be 'by faith': inasmuch as the vision of Christ attained by the angels surpasses his present capacity and Christ in the present life dwells only in the man who offers himself to Christ in faith (Christus manet in hominibus secundum praesentem statum per fidem), fruitful union with Christ in the Eucharist can occur only on the basis of the individual's commitment to Christ through faith.

But, in medieval theology, the possession of 'faith' does not always indicate a living relationship of an individual to Christ whereby a man is infallibly enabled to participate fruitfully in the power of Christ. In the first chapter, there was occasion to observe that Thomas envisioned the possibility of two kinds of faith.<sup>39</sup> The first, 'unformed faith,' is possessed by the individual whose will is not perfected by the habit of charity

and whose faith, therefore, is not extrinsically shaped by a love of God as his final end. The second, more perfect kind of faith, 'formed' or 'living' faith (fides formata), on the other hand, is held by those who are in fact more completely subordinate to God in terms of their will. For Aquinas, it is the second type of faith, faith formed by love, which establishes the individual in a living relationship with Christ and thus, in the treatise on the Eucharist, Thomas often stipulates that in spiritual eating, love, in addition to faith, is required for fruitful communion. Now, in one or two passages, the demands of the immediate context have resulted in Thomas describing the value of love for the conveyance of Christ's benefits to the individual in such a way that, taken in isolation, one would conclude, perhaps, that love alone forms the essence of spiritual eating. Thus, for example, in III, 79, 5c, Thomas mentions why satisfaction for sins is an indirect effect of the Eucharist. The sacrament, he says, was instituted for spiritual nourishing through union with Christ and his members. Now, this union occurs through charity (haec unitas fit per caritatem), which is itself stimulated by Eucharistic reception. Thus, because the sacrament entails the arousal of a greater fervor of charity, by this renewed fervor in the individual, as was mentioned earlier, the sacrament suffices to bring about the forgiveness not

only of the fault, but also of the penalty of sin. Similarly, much later in the treatise,<sup>40</sup> Thomas again mentions the significance of love when he refers in passing to the function of the Holy Spirit in granting to the recipient of the Eucharist the benefits of Christ here contained: love is essential to the attainment of these benefits, for the Spirit employs the bond of charity uniting the mystical body (. . . per unitatem caritatis) to communicate to each member the goods which are granted to those who truly belong to Christ.

More typically, however, rather than speak of the need for love (or, for that matter, for faith) in isolation in the elucidation of the character of spiritual eating, Thomas describes spiritual eating in terms of the necessity for both faith and love: as he says in numerous passages, spiritual eating demands and presupposes the individual's union to Christ 'through faith and love.' Hence, to cite but one outstanding example manifesting Thomas' conviction that the sacrament benefits only those who celebrate the Eucharist in a loving and faithful fashion, in the very first article in which Thomas attempts to define the nature of spiritual eating, Aquinas underscores the necessity of these qualities for the attainment of the sacramental effects: as contrasted with merely sacramental eating, in spiritual eating, affirms St. Thomas, a man attains the effect of this sacrament whereby

he is joined spiritually to Christ through faith and love (. . . spiritualem manducationem, per quam quis percipit effectum huius sacramenti, quo spiritualiter homo Christo conjungitur per fidem et caritatem).<sup>41</sup>

That this living relationship established by the individual's movement to God in faith and love is crucial for the reception of the spiritual goods consequent upon real presence is a point which Thomas makes in somewhat different fashion in his analysis of how the reception of the Eucharist may itself be the occasion of mortal sin.<sup>42</sup> As has been stated, for Aquinas the principal effect of the Eucharist is the enhancement of the mystical body of Christ: through its reception, the bond of love uniting the individual to Christ and to the other members of the Church is strengthened. This means, then, that the reception of the sacrament signifies in itself the membership of the recipient in this body, for by his act he announces his claim to the goods of Christ here conveyed. Now, no one belongs to Christ or shares in his power unless joined to Christ through faith and love. But, this is impossible for the mortal sinner, whose sin is destructive of all love and of every feeling of community with Christ. Indeed, as Thomas had argued earlier, mortal sin brings death to the sinner and thus one enthralled to sin is unable to benefit from the Eucharist--after all, it is impossible that this spiritual food, through which there

is life, should be of value to one who is spiritually dead.<sup>43</sup>

In the present context, the inability of the mortal sinner to belong to the mystical body means that his reception of the Eucharist constitutes a misrepresentation of the truth: since the act of receiving suggests that he is united to Christ and incorporated in his members (Quicumque . . . hoc sacramentum sumit, ex hoc ipso significat se, esse Christo unitum, et membris eius incorporatum), which occurs through living faith (quod . . . fit per fidem formatam), when he receives the sacrament, he acts a falsehood, and so is guilty of the mortal sin of sacrilege as a violator of this sacrament.<sup>44</sup> Thus, on account of his attachment to mortal sin, the mendacity of this recipient transforms, as far as he is concerned, what is in itself, and in relation to the true members of the Church, the source of life into the occasion of further sin.

In addition to the value which this discussion has for our knowledge of the precise mode and context of the spiritual reception of the Eucharist, the delineation of the beneficial effects of this sacrament and the requirements for spiritual eating has added importance in the theology of St. Thomas, for this account also allows Thomas, in turn, to formulate significant conclusions in the treatise on the Eucharist about the central position occupied by the sacrament in the spiritual life.

In particular, his understanding of the basically spiritual quality of Eucharistic reception has enabled St. Thomas to underscore most vividly the relation, and resemblance, of this sacrament to other crucial stages in man's return to God. In the first place, a prominent feature of his Eucharistic teaching is the repeated attempt to demonstrate the manner in which this sacrament foreshadows in the present life the experience of God to be enjoyed in the beatific vision. On the one hand, of course, rather than concentrate on the anticipatory character of sacramental reception, in some passages in which he has sought to relate the Eucharist to the final vision, Thomas has emphasized more the contribution of the sacrament to sustaining the members of the Church in their journey to God. Thus, for example, in those texts in which he considers the name 'viaticum' which is sometimes applied to this sacrament, Thomas' principal interest is to explain the value of the Eucharist in granting men the power to continue their pilgrimage in the present life. Hence, in the first text in which he seeks to justify this name, Thomas writes that the term 'viaticum' is appropriately used of the Eucharist on account of the orientation to the future which the use of this sacrament manifests: it is called 'viaticum', for it keeps us on the road to heaven (quia hoc praebet nobis viam illuc perveniendi) and thus enables us to achieve the eternal

inheritance promised by God to the Church.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, later in the treatise, Thomas has advanced basically the same argument in support of this designation: although the sacrament does not immediately effect the entrance of the members of the Church into heaven, the Eucharist is rightly called 'viaticum', for it serves as the instrumental cause in the present life of the eventual attainment of eternal glory by endowing men with the strength to attain their goal (hoc sacramentum non statim nos in gloriam introducit, sed dat nobis virtutem perveniendi ad gloriam, et ideo viaticum dicitur).<sup>46</sup>

But, on the other hand, Thomas has supplemented this part of his teaching on the relation of the Eucharist to the ultimate goal of the spiritual life by also stressing that the very reception of the Eucharist anticipates the contemplation of God and Christ in heaven. Indeed, even in the texts just considered in which he observes that the sacrament facilitates the journey of men to God, Thomas has based this affirmation on the fact that the reception of the Eucharist resembles the final vision: the sacrament provides sustenance to men in their quest precisely because of the sacrament's intrinsic similarity to the content of the beatific vision, in which it will be ours to enjoy in themselves both the godhead, and, the humanity of Christ (the means of our salvation).<sup>47</sup> Hence, in the first text in which he examines the name

'viaticum', Thomas prefaces his consideration by observing that the Eucharist has a future signification by virtue of its prefiguration of that enjoyment of God which will be had in heaven (significationem habet respectu futuri: inquantum scilicet hoc sacramentum est praefigurativum fruitionis Dei, quae erit in patria. Et secundum hoc dicitur 'viaticum', quia hoc praebet . . .).<sup>48</sup> No text, however, suggests Thomas' conviction that the importance of this sacrament derives from the fact that it constitutes the provisional realization in the present life of man's religious destiny quite as well as III, 75, 1c, in which Thomas has referred to this notion in the context of his consideration of the fittingness of real presence. For Thomas, the real presence of Christ is appropriate for it is in keeping with the love of Christ for men which earlier had caused him to assume human flesh for their salvation. Now, love is best expressed in the presence of friends with each other. Thus, for this reason, Christ has promised those whom he loves his bodily presence (praesentia corporalis) as a reward in heaven. But, he has not left the beloved without his bodily presence in their present journey (peregrinatio) in the world: rather, as Thomas says, by this sacrament in which he truly exists, Christ remains in contact with the faithful, whom he joins to himself through the reality of his Eucharistic body and blood (per veritatem corporis et sanguinis sui nos



sibi conjungit in hoc sacramento). It is because the sacrament makes possible the close union of the believer to Christ, in turn, that Thomas can argue for the eschatological significance of the Eucharist: as Thomas observes in conclusion, on account of the present contact with the Lord by virtue of his real presence, through which Christ grants the faithful power to continue in their quest in union with him, the sacrament is for the Church both the sign of Christ's great love for men (which will be manifested perfectly in the future),<sup>49</sup> and, the mainstay of its hope for eternal life with Christ in heaven (unde hoc sacramentum est maximae caritatis signum, et nostrae spei sublevamentum, ex tam familiari conjunctione Christi ad nos).

On the basis of the recognition of this resemblance of the Eucharist to the beatific vision, Thomas further ascribes to the sacrament in other texts a status in the present life commensurate with that enjoyed by the final union with God in terms of the entire spectrum of man's religious activities. In the theology of St. Thomas, as has been said, the enjoyment of God constitutes the ultimate goal of all of man's spiritual endeavours: it is the prospect of possessing God in manifest vision which propels the Church in its journey in the present world. But, that the Eucharist allows the members of the Church to anticipate the final vision means, for St. Thomas, that the Eucharist

too constitutes for the present the goal of man's spiritual existence. Hence, in some passages, Thomas has designated this sacrament, the 'summit' of all the sacraments of the New Law, for it is to the Eucharist, he says, that the reception of the other sacraments is oriented. Thus, for example, in III, 73, 3c, Thomas affirms that the sacrament of Baptism is wholly subordinate to the Eucharist: its principal value consists in the fact that as the 'entrance to the sacramental life' (principium spiritualis vitae, et ianua sacramentorum), it sets man on the way to the Eucharist, the consummation and goal of the sacraments (quasi consummatio spiritualis vitae, et omnium sacramentorum finis), in which he is able to embrace in salutary fashion the person of the saviour of all. Implicit in this description of the pre-eminence of the Eucharist in the present spiritual life of man is the assumption that what is imperfect tends to completion in that which is perfect. Now, in comparison to the Eucharist, the other sacraments of the New Law are relatively 'imperfect': whereas the others convey only Christ's power, the Eucharist actually grants men both his power and Christ himself. Hence, inasmuch as the presence of the thing itself is more complete than the mere presence of its effects, Thomas is justified in concluding that the Eucharist acts as the goal, the fulfillment, of the other sacraments.<sup>50</sup>

Yet, despite the description of the Eucharist in

august terms as the pinnacle of the present spiritual life, Thomas nevertheless has tempered this affirmation with the explicit recognition elsewhere that the Eucharist does not wholly satisfy man's thirst for the enjoyment of God in heaven: its own imperfection in relation to the final vision means that this sacrament itself always remains subordinate to the ultimate goal of the spiritual life, tending toward its own completion in the final vision.<sup>51</sup> Thus, in the passage to which we earlier referred in which Thomas explains that it is for men alone to eat the sacrament spiritually,<sup>52</sup> Thomas proposes two ways in which the reception of the sacrament falls short of the experience of God in heaven. In the first place, of course, the two forms of encounter realize the presence of Christ to the Church in different ways. On the one hand, in the final vision God and Christ will present themselves as they are, directly and without the mediation of signs: at this time, just as the angels now do, men will feed on Christ under his own appearance (in specie propria). But, the direct experience of Christ transcends the present capacity of man--he is unable to know Christ 'face to face'. Thus, on the other hand, in conformity with human limitations, Christ offers himself to men, not as he actually exists, but indirectly, 'under the appearances of this sacrament' (prout est sub speciebus huius sacramenti). In this sense, then, the

Eucharistic presence of the Lord is a mere shadow of his more direct self-revelation in the final vision: it cannot satisfy man's deepest desire for immediate contact with Christ. Corresponding to the imperfect revelation of Christ in this sacrament is the very limitation of man which necessitates this indirect self-manifestation of Christ. Thus, Thomas in this passage differentiates Eucharistic reception from the final vision in a second way by observing the diverse manners of approach employed by man in the two. For Aquinas, the blessedness of heaven consists in the intimate knowledge of God through manifest vision: in clear vision, men will be united to God directly, possessing Him as He truly is and consequently being transformed by this experience. In the present life, however, man can 'possess' God and Christ, not directly by manifest vision, but only by faith: human knowledge of spiritual truths is wholly dependent upon a trust in the authoritative word of God by which a man comes to be united to Christ.<sup>53</sup> Thus, for these two reasons, in addition to the strength which the sacrament makes available to maintain the Church in its pilgrimage, it is possible to conclude that the Eucharist ultimately is valuable for the attainment of glory for a second reason, as a goad impelling men to continue in their quest for God: since the Eucharist can facilitate a meeting with Christ only 'through signs' and 'by faith', despite

its undoubted significance for man's present spiritual condition, the very imperfection of this encounter must stimulate the renewed yearning of the faithful for the fulfillment of their deepest religious desire, in that direct and total possession of Christ in which they will overcome all barriers presently separating Christ from his Church.

Just as the Eucharist stands in close relation to the goal of the spiritual life, so too the sacrament enjoys a similar relation to the other term of the return to God, the initial conversion of man from sin to the Lord. In the first place, of course, it is quite clear that worthy reception of the Eucharist presupposes the re-establishment of human community with God through justification: as should be manifest from the earlier examination of the manner in which Eucharistic reception may be the occasion of sin, only when the individual has already been joined to Christ, by God's grace, through faith and love can he actually benefit from his further contact with Christ in the Eucharist. But, secondly, there is an additional dimension to the relation between this sacrament and initial justification: not only does the sacrament presuppose conversion; reception of the Eucharist also seems to constitute in this life the ultimate intensification and deepening of the relation with Christ established through justification. For Aquinas,

that the Eucharist acts as the fulfillment of initial justification is suggested by at least two considerations. First of all, the Eucharist brings Christ himself into closer communion with the faithful: although he already 'dwells in their hearts by faith,' Christ's corporeal presence in this sacrament enables the members of the Church to experience an even more intimate contact with him. Thus, as Thomas writes in this regard, a principal value of this sacrament is that it achieves the (closer) union of Christ and Church, for in worthy reception, man 'is joined to Christ' himself by means of the sacrament (. . . uniri Christo, quod fit per hoc sacramentum).<sup>54</sup>

But, perhaps more importantly, the Eucharist 'completes' in this world the process initiated by the first movement of man to God in faith, for the more intimate association with Christ achieved in this sacrament in turn permits the worthy recipient to share more fully in the saving resources of the Lord. Through the initial conversion to God, the being and existence of the justified man are indeed transformed: redeemed from the bondage of sin, he is inwardly healed and restored by the infusion of God's unmerited grace and love, which cause him to offer himself in living faith to God. But, for Aquinas, contact with Christ himself in the spiritual eating of this sacrament means that the believer is able to realize more perfectly the grace and power occasioned by God's saving

work in Christ. Thus, at the personal level, for example, the reception of the 'sacrament of charity' has implications for human existence beyond the mere stimulation and increase of the believer's love of God through which the sins disruptive of the living relationship with the Lord are removed; indeed, the gift of grace in union with Christ in addition has 'preservative' power, for this 'spiritual food and medicine' strengthens the recipient inwardly, thereby making possible his avoidance of future temptation.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, as has been demonstrated, the Eucharistic gift of Christ and access to his power also has communal implications, for by cementing the bond of love which unites all to God, the Eucharist secures the position of the worthy recipient in the mystical body of Christ, thus insuring his claim to the glory promised to all members of the Church.<sup>56</sup>

Yet, there is at least one sense in which the relation between initial conversion and the reception of the sacrament is even closer for Aquinas than already indicated. To this point in this brief discussion of the Eucharist as the fulfillment of the process of justification, following Aquinas' own analysis, our concern has been with adults who have had free access to the sacraments after their conversion to God. But, Thomas was aware that some have come to Christ who for various reasons have been unable to partake of the sacraments. Thus,

given the importance of the Eucharist for the increase of grace and love, the forgiveness of sin, and, especially the consolidation of the believer's membership in the community of the saved, the question naturally arises whether salvation is actually a possibility for those prevented from receiving the Eucharist. Now, on the basis of the discussion in this chapter, it would be difficult to deny the importance which St. Thomas ascribes to actual Eucharistic reception. But, Thomas has balanced his appreciation of the sacraments with the conviction of the infinite power of God: as he says in vivid fashion in the treatise on the sacraments, 'God did not cause his power to be restricted to the sacraments in such a way that he could not bestow the effect of the sacraments without the sacraments themselves.'<sup>57</sup> That God can convey the benefits of the various sacraments apart from physical reception thus allows Aquinas to argue that for the adult who experiences conversion but cannot employ the sacraments for the manifestation of his faith and love to obtain their effects, his spiritual destiny is not affected by the inability to receive the sacrament: because of God's power, Thomas adds, he may yet receive the fruits of the sacrament in a distinctive way.

In this regard, in addition to the actual reception of the Eucharist (in re, actu), Thomas has posited the notion of a reception 'by desire or pledge' (in voto),



through which the individual may receive the benefits of the Eucharist.<sup>58</sup> Now, as St. Thomas observes in the treatise on Baptism,<sup>59</sup> this votum or desiderium<sup>60</sup> of the individual arises from 'faith working through love' (Galatians 5:6)<sup>61</sup> by means of which God can sanctify a man without the visible sacrament. Hence, votum strictly speaking is not itself equivalent to the initial act of justification in which a man proclaims for the first time his love and faith in God; rather, votum for the sacrament emerges as an immediate consequence of initial conversion and the new relation established by living faith in Christ. Thus, in III, 79, 3c, Thomas refers to the idea of a reception of the Eucharist 'by desire' to explain how the Eucharist may effect the forgiveness not only of venial, but indeed of mortal sin. Earlier in the corpus, Thomas had observed that under normal circumstances, the Eucharist could not achieve the remission of mortal sin: although the Passion of Christ here at work has, of course, the power to forgive all sin, mortal sin creates an obstacle (impedimentum) in the recipient preventing the application of the sacramental effect to him. Instead, as Thomas notes later in this article, a man in mortal sin actually obtains the forgiveness of mortal sin only at one point in his spiritual quest, when God's grace is infused for the first time in the mortal sinner (gratia est sufficiens causa remissionis peccati

mortalis; non tamen actu remittit peccatum mortale, nisi cum primo datur peccatori). Hence, as Thomas here notes, since the actual reception of the Eucharist does not correspond to the initial act of justification (sic autem non datur in hoc sacramento), Eucharistic reception does not achieve the forgiveness of mortal sin.<sup>62</sup> But, in the corpus, Thomas has admitted two exceptions to this general observation, in which the sacrament does indeed cause forgiveness (potest tamen hoc sacramentum operari remissionem peccati dupliciter). The second, which deals with the man who receives the sacrament devoutly while unaware of his mortal sin, does not here concern us.<sup>63</sup> But, in the first case, Thomas has illustrated well the intimate relation between initial justification and the reception of the sacrament: 'reception' occasions forgiveness when the Eucharist is received not in fact, but in 'promise', as when a person is first justified from sin (uno modo non perceptum actu, sed voto, sicut cum quis prius justificatur a peccato). Hence, as the discussion in this article discloses, for Aquinas closely related to justification, though not identical with it, is the desire, arising from his new living faith, to enter into the even more intense relationship with the Lord made possible by the sacrament, a desire which enables the justified man unable to receive physically the Eucharist nevertheless to obtain the gifts proffered through it.

Thomas' analysis of Eucharistic reception in voto quite clearly presupposes his conviction about the centrality of the sacrament in man's present spiritual life which he has enunciated so forcefully in his treatment of the relation of the Eucharist to the beatific vision: it is only on the basis of the belief that the Eucharist alone completely effects the unity of the mystical body of Christ, which is necessary for salvation,<sup>64</sup> for example, that Thomas' insistence on the need for its reception 'by desire', if not in fact, can be justified.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, the correct comprehension of certain, initially puzzling assertions of Aquinas in his delineation of Eucharistic reception by desire demands our recollection of his explicit mention elsewhere in this treatise of the importance of this sacrament for human spirituality in this world. For example, in III, 79, 1 ad 1, Thomas has sought to indicate the importance of the Eucharist by determining the function performed in human existence by the grace which it offers to the worthy. Now, the first objection of this article had argued that in fact, no grace could be given through this sacrament, for there does not seem to be a point in the spiritual return to God at which this grace would be of significance to men. On the one hand, the Eucharist is 'spiritual nourishment'. Thus, since nourishment is given only to the living, and spiritual life originates in the gift of grace, the supposed gift

of grace in the Eucharist could not in the first instance initiate the spiritual life. On the other hand, this means that if the Eucharist did grant grace, it would have to be given to those who already have grace, for the purpose of their spiritual growth. But, since this is the function of confirmation, it would seem that even after the initial infusion of grace, there is no role which its grace could perform.

In response, Thomas offers a rather lengthy consideration of the value of Eucharistic grace for the members of the Church in which he demonstrates that on both counts, the evaluation given in the first objection is in fact mistaken. With regard to the latter argument, he concedes that both confirmation and the Eucharist do indeed work for spiritual growth. Yet, he immediately notes, they do so for different purposes. Confirmation increases grace so that the recipient might resist the outward onslaughts of the enemies of Christ. But, in the Eucharist, grace is increased and the life of the spirit perfected so that a man be perfected in himself through union with God (per hoc . . . sacramentum augetur gratia et perficitur spiritualis vita, ad hoc quod homo in seipso perfectus existat per conjunctionem ad Deum). Even more interesting than this testimony to the significance of the Eucharist in normal circumstances of the religious life, however, is Aquinas' reply to the first

argument of the objection, that if it is given, the grace of the Eucharist does not initiate the spiritual life: not only does Thomas affirm that this sacrament does grant grace; but indeed he stresses that 'no one has grace before receiving the Eucharist, except from the desire for it' (nec aliquis habet gratiam ante susceptionem huius sacramenti, nisi ex aliquo voto ipsius).<sup>66</sup> Our

initial impression, of course, is that the wish to establish the capacity of the sacrament to bestow grace has led St. Thomas to claim too much for the Eucharist--it is difficult to understand the exclusivity of this statement, for, after all, Thomas was quite able to describe the initial conversion of men to God in the treatise on grace without once referring to this absolute necessity of the Eucharist for the initial infusion of grace. Yet, further reflection and the application of the teaching of those passages in which Thomas has explicitly described the Eucharist as the 'summit' of the Christian life reveal the consistency of this initially provocative statement with the doctrine expounded elsewhere in the Summa:

because the Eucharist facilitates the union with Christ in such a way that his benefits are most fully appropriated, initial conversion to God is not really completed (and therefore the infusion of grace successful) unless accompanied by that desire of the Eucharist and its fruit which in Thomas' analysis naturally arises from the first movement

of the individual to Christ in faith and love, for only then will the believer's more perfect living union with Christ and his members be effected.

On the whole, Thomas' presentation of the meaning and importance of Eucharistic reception, and of the relation of the sacrament to other crucial stages of the spiritual life, serves as vivid testimony to the seriousness with which Thomas sought to integrate his understanding of grace into the description of the Eucharist. For St. Thomas, of course, salvation ultimately depends on the saving movement of God by which He turns men back to Him through grace. Yet, as is evident from the discussion in the first chapter, God's call to man demands on man's part an appropriate response of faith and love which must be present, not only at the beginning of the spiritual life, but indeed at all stages of human existence at which the offer of grace and saving power is to be realized personally. It is upon this requirement of fidelity and love for the maintenance and enhancement of the living relationship to Christ through which the achievement of salvation is possible that St. Thomas insists so rigorously and successfully in the treatise on the Eucharist.

Nevertheless, despite our general approval of Aquinas' treatment of Eucharistic reception, some doubt remains about the complete adequacy of his analysis of the manner in which Christ offers himself through the

Eucharist to the various possible recipients of this sacrament. In particular, our attempt to depict the meeting with Christ in the present chapter has been hindered in the first instance by a certain ambiguity inherent in the notion of the 'sacramental eating' of the Eucharistic Christ. As Thomas freely admits in at least one passage, the distinction of 'sacramental' from 'spiritual eating' parallels in his analysis of the other sacraments the general differentiation of the mere offer of grace from its actual reception: just as in the other sacraments not all who receive the sacramental sign obtain the grace realized by the sacrament, so too not everyone who receives the Eucharist receives its fruits.<sup>67</sup> The insight which underlies the positing of a merely 'sacramental eating' in addition to spiritual reception in the Eucharist is, of course, absolutely sound: the bestowal of grace in the Eucharist can never be a 'mechanistic' affair in which the question of the spiritual character of the recipient is irrelevant to the actual giving of grace. But, despite this agreement 'in principle' with Thomas' purpose in introducing this distinction, it must be admitted that some difficulty is created by the affirmation of 'sacramental eating'. In the other sacraments, little problem need be posed by the distinction of the offer from the actual reception of their grace--for the individual who in reality stands apart from Christ, his failure to

appropriate personally their gifts simply constitutes a failure on his own part to realize at their innermost level the true meaning of these signs. Indeed, insofar as one cause of the Eucharistic benefits is the sacrament's relation to the Passion as its sign, similar justification is provided this distinction in this sacrament. But, as applied to the Eucharist, the divorce between sacrament and effect has greater scope than in the other sacraments: not only does it apply to the sign-quality of the sacrament, the proper understanding of which is integral to the reception of the benefits signified by that sacrament; at an even deeper level, it also suggests the separation of Christ himself from the goods which he offers to men through contact with him in the sacrament. In view of his analysis of the mode of real presence, Thomas is compelled to argue that Christ remains under the species for as long as the original substances would have remained. Thus, even when the sacrament is received by an unworthy recipient, Christ remains under the sacrament and hence is 'eaten' by this recipient--though he is not digested by any partaker of the Eucharist (for reasons noted above in the text), since Christ stands in relation to the species, when the species are taken into anyone, man or beast, by this act Christ comes in turn into relation with him.<sup>68</sup> That they receive Christ, however, does not indicate whether in fact they also actually attain his goods:



as we have seen, the further reception of Christ's benefits depends, in Aquinas' doctrine, on their additional possession of appropriate spiritual qualities--the faith and love which join all spiritually to Christ in such a way that Christ's goods can be effectively transferred to his beloved. As this brief review demonstrates, therefore, the effect of the introduction of a 'sacramental eating' in the Eucharist is the separation of Christ from his benefits and consequently the supposition of an unfruitful meeting with the Lord in this sacrament.

Now, as has been indicated, viewed in the light of his consistent understanding of the bestowal of grace, the affirmation of an unfruitful contact with Christ in sacramental eating seems to be absolutely necessary--only those who, moved by God, in fact offer themselves to Christ in faith and love should benefit from the real presence of Christ in the sacrament, for Christ intends that the Eucharist be a source of new life only for the true members of his Church. But, although quite understandable in this light, the separation of Christ from his goods in this way creates, in reality, a difficulty of interpretation for the reader of St. Thomas: given the significance assigned by Aquinas generally to Christ himself as the fount of salvation and especially to the various modes of encounter with Christ at different stages of the spiritual life for realizing more perfectly Christ's

saving power, it is simply not clear what Thomas can mean here, without further explanation, by allowing in the Eucharist Christ's fruitless presence to different recipients. In Thomas' theology, it is the personal knowledge of Christ which deepens the individual's spiritual experience. On the one hand, as we have seen, the very beginning of the spiritual life in this world is constituted by man's turning to God in Christ through faith and love--in this way, freed from sin, a man starts to 'possess' Christ by living faith, thus appropriating his redeeming power. On the other hand, it is the more perfect and immediate possession of God and Christ in the beatific vision which stands as the goal of man's spiritual endeavours--the knowledge of Christ which he holds incipiently by faith will be completed and consolidated in manifest vision. This means, then, that for St. Thomas, Christ's own presence to men, at varying levels of intensity and expression, is essential to the attainment of the different plateaus of the spiritual life. Thomas has applied this understanding of the importance of contact with Christ to his delineation of the centrality of the Eucharist (and spiritual eating) for the present fulfillment of men: the cruciality of the Eucharist for human salvation derives from its capacity to bring Christ himself to men through the medium of the sacramental species.

Yet, though the sacrament in this regard thus

conforms to the pattern of 'meeting' pervading the theology of St. Thomas, the Eucharist differs from the termini of the spiritual life in one important respect. Initial conversion and the beatific vision are both reserved for the just, those predestined by God for salvation. Hence, when Thomas describes the meeting with Christ which occurs in these events, it is not necessary for him to specify in addition that Christ offers himself to his own in a loving and personal way, that is, as a spiritual force beneficial to them--in the simple affirmation of Christ's 'presence' to the members of the Church, who possess the appropriate spiritual disposition, he assumes that Christ makes himself available to men precisely as the loving source of their being. But, the situation is not as simple in the Eucharist, for the consecration of the Eucharistic species entails Christ's 'indiscriminate' presence to the world--in fulfillment of his promise to the disciples, the proper offering of the host infallibly achieves Christ's presence under it and consequently to all, just and unjust, who receive the sacrament. Hence, whereas in the other spiritual events confined to the just, Christ's presence is thus valuable for all, for some in the Eucharist the mere availability of Christ under the species cannot possibly provide the opportunity for entering more profoundly into the spiritual life, for their association with Christ has

no spiritual import. First of all, as has been noted, sin renders some completely unworthy of Christ in the sacrament: cut off from the body of Christ, their spiritual sensibility deadened by bondage to sin, that Christ is now available in the host to the members of the Church as the source of justifying love and grace for them can only be a matter of indifference to those who live apart from the Lord; their eating does not emanate from the spiritual capacity for new grace. But, secondly, Thomas has also referred in this treatise to others who can eat the sacrament, and thus achieve some type of 'contact' with Christ, but even more obviously cannot conceivably benefit from the Eucharist for reasons other than their sin. Hence, in III, 80, 3 ad 3, Thomas considers whether brute animals who happen upon the host can eat the Eucharist 'sacramentally'. In his treatment of this problem, Thomas argues that strictly speaking, mice and dogs do not so eat--since they were 'not born to use the host as a sacrament', in their eating, they eat neither sacramentally nor spiritually, but only 'accidentally' (per accidens). (Presumably, by 'not born to use the sacrament', Thomas implies both that sacraments are meant for men, and, that men alone can possess the faith needed to employ material objects as sacraments.) But, his analysis of real presence compels him to concede in the same text that though they (obviously) do not benefit from

their reception, just as in more typical 'sacramental eating', when they eat, mice and dogs too come into 'contact' with the Lord by virtue of his presence under the species. Thus, as the example of the mouse displays preeminently (although not exclusively), the 'meeting' between Christ and recipient through the sacrament can occur in a totally non-spiritual context, although, as has been noted, Thomas nowhere has attempted to explain what this sort of meeting, unparalleled in the spiritual life, actually entails.

The unique factors which govern the reception of this sacrament--especially the possibility of Christ's presence to the unjust and even to the non-human--would therefore seem to demand that Thomas perfect his analysis of the encounter with Christ in this sacrament by delineating more completely the different ways in which, in fact, Christ and the various possible recipients of the Eucharist must come into contact with each other. To some extent, Thomas has attempted to suggest this by his review of the spiritual requirements (or lack thereof) of the recipients in the different kinds of eating in the Eucharist. But, as the possibility of the mouse (or indeed even of sinners or ignorant eaters)<sup>69</sup> eating suggests, Thomas should also have been more precise on the different ways in which Christ himself employs the sacrament as his means of contact with different segments

of the world. As far as spiritual eating is concerned, Thomas' affirmation of the value of Christ's presence is acceptable, for the same conditions which govern the meeting of Christ and men in other spiritual encounters apply also to this manner of Eucharistic reception. In terms of the mouse, for example, who eats the host by change, however, there can be no question, of course, that Christ uses the Eucharist in this case to 'offer himself' as the source of life to this creature, who quite clearly exists outside of God's salvific plan. In this instance, Thomas' conviction of the importance of the real presence of Christ in this sacrament (derived, in part at least, from its similarity to other examples of Christ's 'presence' at different stages of human spirituality) cannot stand without qualification: in view of the non-spiritual encounter with the Eucharistic Christ, Thomas should have explained why it is that presence in itself in this case need not involve Christ's 'offer of himself' to a non-spiritual recipient, in order not only to reveal what actually occurs in such an unique (non-spiritual) encounter, but also, more importantly, to demonstrate how this meeting differs profoundly from that in spiritual reception. By definition, the sacrament is Christ's tool by which he seeks to renew contact with his own to strengthen them spiritually that success in their quest for salvation be guaranteed.<sup>70</sup> Hence, when

others intrude in this process, the sacrament itself would seem to cease to be this instrument of Christ for the edification of the Church. Indeed, the removal of the sacrament from its spiritual frame of reference in this way would seem to require, on Thomas' own understanding of the importance of real presence and the spiritual context within which the mutual interaction between man and Christ occurs, that Christ's very presence under the host be 'altered': no longer addressed to one capable of receiving spiritually the Christ here present, when received by the unspiritual, Christ no longer can offer himself to the recipient through this sacrament as a sign of spiritual union. The failure to make this clear in the Summa has simply confused the issue, for Thomas in his discussion of sacramental (and accidental) eating thus admits that real presence can be of limited value in certain instances without explaining, against the background of his general affirmation of the value of this presence, how in fact this can be so. Hence, to provide a more secure foundation for his affirmation, in terms of spiritual eating, of the significance of Christ's presence in the sacrament, as well as to illumine the character of unfruitful eating, it is necessary that into the discussion of eating, a greater awareness of the different intensities of presence of which Christ is capable in regards to the various possible kinds of

recipient be incorporated: since in some cases the sacrament is clearly not being employed for its rightful purpose, it would have been most appropriate for Aquinas to suggest that Christ himself is present to mice and sinners in a way fundamentally different than that in which he approaches his own, thereby providing for the presence(s) of Christ in a way suitable to the range of recipients of this sacrament.

As will become evident in the final chapter of this thesis, this proposal of a possible solution to the difficulties in the account of real presence and of the encounters with Christ in this sacrament as portrayed by Aquinas in the Summa has been greatly influenced by the analysis of the Eucharist offered by certain contemporary Catholic theologians, who aware of the possibility of the 'non-spiritual' contact with Christ on account of the consecration's capacity to effect real presence, have ensured the recognition of the value of Christ's presence precisely for the Church by discerning, in effect, numerous dimensions of his presence in the Eucharist. Now, in the final chapter, some care will be devoted to the delineation of the arguments of these theologians by which they guarantee the personal and meaningful presence of the Lord only to the faithful, without denying at the same time the truth of Christ's unfailing presence in the sacrament; thus, it is not the intention of these brief



reflections to pre-empt this later analysis. Rather, all that will here be noted is that by the contemplation of the different modes of presence of which the human person is capable--that is, by exposing the difference between the mutual presence of lovers in embrace, and, the mere presence of strangers standing next to each other without communication--they have quite convincingly demonstrated that Christ's real presence in the sacrament in a loving and open manner to the faithful alone (which is necessary to establish the importance of the Eucharist in human spirituality) need not thereby entail his (meaningless) offer of himself in precisely the same way to those indifferent to Christ or incapable of reciprocating this love. As has been argued, it seems that some such analysis of the various modes of Christ's presence in the sacrament is required by modern Thomists to complete the doctrine of St. Thomas, for only by proceeding in this fashion will they have been able to preserve the meaningfulness of his stress on the saving significance of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. The incorporation of these insights into his account would clearly reveal that corresponding to the different spiritual dispositions possible in the recipients of this sacrament are, in fact, the different manners of Christ's own presence. To those who demonstrate their dependence on Christ by their self-offering in faith and love, Christ

would be acknowledged to be present in the truly personal way possible to a human person elevated and transformed (by the resurrection) into a force of spiritual power; by this understanding of Christ's own activity of self-giving in the sacrament, the notion of the loving relation between Christ and the Church established by the sacrament, suggested most successfully by Thomas in the analysis of the sacramental effects, would be re-inforced. On the other hand, for those recipients who are themselves 'indifferent' to the Lord, the consecration would demand nothing more of Christ than his own 'indifferent' presence, a real presence indeed in the sacrament, in accordance with his original promise to the disciples, but one which would not require that he actually offer himself as the source of life to those not moved by God to the proper response. In this way, by virtue of the more profound examination of the dimensions of presence and the applications of the conclusions of this investigation to the otherwise excellent account of the Eucharist in St. Thomas, the contemporary students of Aquinas will succeed in resolving the problems plaguing his teaching, by guaranteeing the personal character of Christ's presence to the Church, while nevertheless allowing some mode of presence even to those outside the body of Christ.

In addition to the necessary role of faith in appropriating the grace offered directly to the Eucharistic

recipient, Thomas has discerned in the treatise on the Eucharist two further, relatively minor contributions of faith to the proper deployment of this sacrament. In the first place, Thomas argues for the presence of faith for the reception of the benefits occasioned by the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. As was mentioned in the second chapter, alone among the sacraments of the New Law, the Eucharist also is a sacrifice, for it stands in an especially close relation to the true sacrifice of the New Law, the Passion of Christ: since at various levels the Eucharist signifies most perfectly Christ's Passion and in this way makes it present to the Church, by extension this sacrament also comes to share in the sacrificial quality of the Passion. Now, for Thomas, as he states in III, 79, 7c, that the Eucharist is also a sacrifice means that it can benefit others than just those who receive the sacrament actu or voto--inasmuch as Christ's sacrifice was offered for the salvation of all members of the Church, so too by the offering of this 'sacrifice', even those who do not partake of the sacrament itself benefit from the celebration of the Eucharistic commemoration of Christ's self-offering by which he satisfied for human sin. But, as the second objection of this article observes, this raises, in turn, the possibility that members of the Church who are undeserving will thus come to benefit from the mere offering of the

Eucharist: if this sacrament did, in fact, cause the increase of grace and the forgiveness of sin in others apart from those who receive it, it would happen that a person could reach grace and forgiveness without any undertaking on his own part, simply by another offering the Eucharist on his behalf, a conclusion which hardly seems to be consistent with Thomas' repeated warning elsewhere that the Eucharist causes its benefits only in those who possess the proper spiritual disposition. In reply (in ad 2), Thomas in effect concedes the correctness of this observation: the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist does not dissolve the need for the presence of an appropriate spiritual response in the recipient of the effects of the sacrifice. Rather, as in the reception of the sacrament itself, so in the reception of the benefits of the sacrifice, to attain the effects herein offered, one must be joined to Christ through faith and love--that the sacrifice of the Eucharist infallibly makes available these gifts can mean nothing to the individual living apart from Christ, for in this regard, too, there is a difference between the offer and the actual reception of these spiritual goods. Thus, as Thomas here concludes in a remarkable passage, the situation in force in this sacrifice of the New Law is precisely the same as that in effect with regard to the true sacrifice of Christ on the Cross: 'just as Christ's Passion

benefits all, being sufficient for the forgiving of sins and the attaining of grace and glory, though it produces no effect save in those who are united to his Passion through faith and charity, so likewise this sacrifice, which is a memorial of the Lord's Passion, has no effect save on those who are united to the sacrament through faith and charity' (sicut passio Christi prodest quidem omnibus quantum ad sufficientiam, ad remissionem culpae et adeptionem gratiae et gloriae, sed effectum non habet nisi in illis qui passioni Christi conjunguntur per fidem et caritatem, ita et hoc sacrificium, quod est memoriale dominicae passionis, non habet effectum nisi in illis qui conjunguntur huic sacramento per fidem et caritatem).

Moreover, Thomas has defined in the treatise on the Eucharist one final aspect of the relation between faith and the Eucharist by noting the contribution of this sacrament to the increase of human merit: as Thomas says in a passage in which he is seeking to explain the wisdom of divine providence's arrangement allowing the accidents of the bread and wine to survive the consecration, the spiritual nature of real presence has added importance for the Christian life, for 'the taking of the body and blood of the Lord in their invisible presence increases the merit of our faith' (dum invisibiliter corpus et sanguinem Domini nostri sumimus, hoc proficiat ad meritum fidei).<sup>71</sup> Since the Reformation, of course, few issues

have been as controversial for the various Christian denominations as the Catholic affirmation of the need for merit to attain heaven. For the great reformers, this teaching of the medieval church constituted conclusive evidence of the church's defection from the gospel of grace, substituting for the original proclamation of man's utter dependence on God a non-Christian belief in the sufficiency of men to gain heaven through works.

Now, it is beyond the competence of this thesis to examine thoroughly Thomas' teaching on merit or to determine the extent to which the reformers' equation of merit with works-righteousness is valid in his case: to note but one difficulty, the sheer complexity of this notion as presented in the Summa precludes the possibility of a brief discussion here which could do justice to the various facets of this intricate doctrine or could adequately assess the exact importance of this teaching in Thomas' general understanding of salvation. But, it is possible to mention at this point a few considerations which suggest, at least, that the mere presence of a notion of merit in Aquinas' theology is insufficient warrant for dismissing his theology as advocating a doctrine which overemphasizes the role of men in accomplishing their own salvation. In the first place, there is a certain significance in the actual placement of Thomas' principal discussion of merit in the Summa: Thomas examines merit

in the treatise on grace in the question (I-II, 114) immediately following his treatment of justification (in q. 113). Now, as was manifest in the first chapter, the dominant feature of Thomas' analysis of justification is the recognition that the re-establishment of communion with God and the eventual attainment of heaven is due primarily to the intervention of God: by his sin before restoration and the continuing possibility of further sin after conversion, man is simply incapable of returning to God on his own or of maintaining this new relation by his own strength. This emphasis on the centrality of grace, then, makes it improbable that St. Thomas should advance in the very next question a teaching which, in effect, contradicts his earlier analysis by making salvation (not God's, but) man's work. Indeed, as will be noted below, an important feature of Thomas' teaching on merit is that the meritorious action is itself the manifestation through human acts of the power of God at work in the world.

Secondly, chief among the criticisms of merit advanced by the reformers is that it elevates man to equality with God, for only on this basis can man presume to 'place God in his debt' through his works. This criticism may, of course, be applicable to the understanding of merit proposed by the church at the time of Luther; but, it seems to be inappropriate to the concept of merit championed by Aquinas. Thomas was under no illusion that

any act proceeding from the human will was in itself meritorious of eternal life--for him, the infinite distance between the Creator and the created meant that no action in the natural order could merit by its intrinsic value the transcendent glory of heaven.<sup>72</sup> Rather than propose the dependence of merit on the natural power of man to 'earn heaven', then, Thomas insists that the possibility of human merit instead derives solely from a certain 'ordination by God' (divina ordinatio). In the first place, this 'divine ordination' implies that God has ordered man to a goal transcending the natural order, the enjoyment of God in heaven. But, secondly, it also means that God has so decreed that to enter heaven, man must prosecute certain acts designed to 'manifest the divine goodness' in the world,<sup>73</sup> which God has deemed appropriate to the new life of grace--to gain heaven, to receive eternal glory from God 'as a sort of reward' (quasi mercedem), man must employ the powers granted him by God (modus . . . et mensura humane virtutis homini est a Deo) in the achievement of those acts which are most consistent with the will of God for man in the world. That merit presupposes the gift of grace, and, that God himself has established the criteria and possibility of merit, suggest, in turn, that in our own examination on the following pages of this difficult concept in St. Thomas, the interest of scholarship will be best served by viewing merit, not in the light of the later polemic of the



reformers against the abuses of the 16-century church, but simply on its own terms, that is, as Thomas himself presents his doctrine: despite a quite proper aversion on our part to any form of works-righteousness in Christianity, it may well be that by his use of this notion Thomas has determined, at least in rudimentary form, a legitimate place in the Christian life for human activity, without violating the basic conviction of his theology of the fundamental importance of God's grace for salvation.<sup>74</sup>

As Aquinas says in a number of passages, merit is the effect of 'cooperative grace.'<sup>75</sup> Now, as will shortly be stressed, an important aspect of the meritorious act is that it issues willingly from the free decision of man--to be worthy of eternal life, the Christian must prosecute this God-directed act in a voluntary and willing manner. But, as the term 'cooperative grace' also implies, essential to the meritorious action is grace directing the human will to its proper act. According to Aquinas in one article in his formal discussion of merit, man without grace cannot merit eternal life, for at least two reasons.<sup>76</sup> First, as has been noted, man by his own power is utterly incapable of the attainment of heaven. Thus, his achievement of the supernatural and to which he is ordered by God demands that he first be restored and perfected by the supernatural gift, the grace of God,

which allows him to perform works in keeping with eternal life. Secondly, grace is also necessary for merit for it removes the impediment created by human sin. Sin, as Thomas observes in this passage, is an offense against God which excludes a man from future communion with God in heaven. Thus, only on the basis of man's restoration to communion with God in the present life through the forgiveness of sin by grace can man merit from God a share in eternal glory<sup>77</sup>--the prosecution of meritorious work presupposes the conversion to God in initial justification by which he enters a correct relationship with his Creator.

This stress on the continued significance of grace even in his examination of the work demanded of the Christian man therefore compels us to conclude that Thomas has endeavoured to present the Church's traditional teaching on merit in such a way that the implications of his earlier analysis of justification will be preserved. Indeed, as St. Thomas emphasizes in numerous places in the discussion of merit in the Summa, the meritorious act has as its principle and source precisely the grace of God--it is only by God moving a man from within that he becomes capable of meriting heaven, for the meritorious act must proceed from the movement of the Holy Spirit leading us to eternal life.<sup>78</sup> Now, in Thomas' analysis, the grace of justification which serves as the source of

the meritorious act<sup>79</sup> is disclosed especially in the love of God as man's proper good which this grace creates and instils in man through conversion. According to Thomas, the value of love for establishing the possibility of merit derives from two factors. In the first place, eternal life consists primarily in the enjoyment of God. Thus, the grace which serves as the principle of merit works especially through that virtue, that power established by the grace of conversion, through which man expressly moves toward the enjoyment of his proper good. But, this movement toward God is an act proper to charity. Hence, Thomas here concludes, an act is meritorious chiefly as it is informed by the love of God, whether this be an act of charity per se, or the act of another virtue--e.g., of faith--which is directed toward God and informed by charity. The second reason that love is important for the determination of the meritorious character of an act has to do with the need for this act to issue voluntarily from the will--since it is clear that what we do out of love, we do with the utmost willingness, the act informed by love hence best ensures the presence of the voluntary nature of man's contribution required for merit.<sup>80</sup>

On account of the grace and love directing the meritorious act, Thomas concludes that man merits eternal life from God 'equivalently,' that is, as a just reward owed him for his act. Merit 'by equivalence,' of course,

in St. Thomas has absolutely nothing to do with the notion that man is capable of placing God in his debt by virtue of his acts, considered precisely as belonging to man--we mentioned earlier in this discussion that Aquinas' conviction of the inequality of man and God precluded the possibility that man's work in itself be deemed worthy of eternal glory. Rather, by his delineation of the concept of a meritum condigni, Thomas means to emphasize the 'gracious' quality of these human acts: they are worthy of eternal life only because they proceed from the grace of the Holy Spirit,<sup>81</sup> which is 'equal' to the life of glory, if not in actuality, at least in power. To illustrate his point, Thomas has recourse to the image of the relation between a tree and its seed.<sup>82</sup> On the one hand, it is clear that the seed is quantitatively smaller than the tree--in this sense, in their actuality, there is a manifest inequality between tree and seed. But, on the other hand, the tree grows from the seed, and hence potentially, the seed is equal to the tree: its power, as Thomas says, is sufficient for the entire tree. A similar relation pertains between grace and eternal life. On the one hand, it is true that grace does not actualize in the present life the glory which will be had in heaven--grace does not cause the intimate possession of God which is integral to eternal life. But, it is through grace that men enter their heavenly inheritance: as Paul says, 'the grace of God is eternal life,'

or, as Thomas himself says in explaining this text from Romans, the primary cause of our reaching eternal life is divine mercy.<sup>83</sup> Thus, in the sense that the grace of God which occasions meritorious acts is equal to life with God in heaven, in the presentation of his teaching on merit, Thomas can legitimately conclude that these actions, because they display God's grace, are indeed worthy by equivalence of eternal life.

But, as has already been noted, there is a second element which is also crucial to the proper understanding of this difficult part of Thomas' doctrine: for actions to be meritorious, they must proceed from the free choice of man.<sup>84</sup> For St. Thomas, man differs from other creatures by virtue of his free will: it belongs to man alone to decide for the good or for the bad.<sup>85</sup> Now, human freedom proceeds from God--as was mentioned earlier, man's entire capacity is granted him by the Creator. Thus, although his act is not in itself worthy of the reward of heaven, there is a certain 'fittingness' (congruitas) that man's performance of those acts which God has deemed worthy of glory should be rewarded by God: since man has offered homage to God by his works according to his power (given to him by God) and has cooperated with God's grace, it is fitting that God out of His own excellence should reward man for his deed.<sup>86</sup> Thus, by his insistence on the need for man's free involvement in these works appropriate to

the spiritual life, Thomas completes his doctrine of merit by positing alongside the notion of meritum condigni, which has as its source the grace which impels the meritorious behaviour of man, the supplementary concept of a meritum congrui,<sup>87</sup> which arises from man's wise and free use of his powers in action in accordance with God's will.

In terms of the Eucharist, then, Thomas' affirmation of the meritorious character of 'eating' Christ invisibly under the species means, in the first place, that his act is God-directed, that is, that is in keeping with the manifestation of God's glory through human behaviour. But, secondly, man's merit in this act arises from his freely-made decision to perform the will of God, to use this sacrament as a source of life: of his own accord, man decides to accept in faith God's promise and affirmation of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and thus to employ the sacrament as a means to his sanctification. Viewed from this perspective, it is fitting that in addition to the grace freely granted those who receive the sacrament in a spiritual manner, the act of reception itself, at a different level, should also be the occasion of God's 'assurance' that this recipient will participate in future in the life of glory--God in His excellence has decreed that He will reward those who have used His gifts in a way appropriate for His

praise. As in other meritorious acts, however, in this decision to accept God's word in faith, man is aided by the gift of grace, which makes his work meritorious in a more profound manner, 'by equivalence.' In particular, God's grace moving man to action worthy of eternal life is manifested in the love of God, informing this act, which the gift of grace in justification instills in the believer. That 'the act of faith is meritorious only if faith works through love'<sup>88</sup> hence ensures a consistency in Thomas' account of the requirements for the appropriation of the gifts of God offered in the Eucharist in various ways: just as faith and love are necessary to benefit from both reception in voto and in re, and, from the sacrificial offering of the Eucharist, so too implicit in his description of the merit of Eucharistic reception is the recognition of the need for the presence of love informing this movement of faith--there is no merit in this 'eating' deserving of the heavenly reward unless man's action announces his union to Christ by 'living faith'. Moreover, Thomas' teaching on merit in the Eucharist further serves to complete, of course, his description of the various strands which bind this sacrament to the goal of the spiritual life. Earlier in this chapter, we observed that in Aquinas, the Eucharist prefigures the final vision, in this way both providing the members of the Church with the strength to persevere in

their journey, and, goading them to continue in their search for the more perfect knowledge of God. But, since the movement to achieve union with Christ in this sacrament through reception is itself meritorious of eternal life with God, in addition to the grace and comfort provided directly to man-on-the-way by contact with Christ in this sacrament, by his free act of faith in the Eucharist occasioned by God's grace and love, the member of the Church thus also warrants in a different way inclusion in the ultimate experience of God.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Conclusion

The investigation of the role of faith in the Eucharistic doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologiae demonstrates the importance of faith for his exposition of this central sacrament of the New Law. In conformity with Thomas' own analysis, the role of faith in this sacrament may be conveniently described in relation to two distinct, yet related, facets of the Eucharist. On the one hand, Thomas invokes faith in the formal discussion of Christ's real presence in the sacrament, and argues that faith is essential for the resolution of the epistemological problem created by his understanding of substantial conversion and presence. For Aquinas, the real presence of Christ is possible only on the basis of God's transformation of the original substances of the bread and wine into those of the body and blood of Christ in heaven. But, as he observes, that transubstantiation has in fact occurred in the consecration of the species is a truth which transcends the capacity of the human mind in the present world. In this life, the knowledge of intelligible truth is dependent on the evidence provided through the senses. Hence, since the change occasioned by the consecration does not alter the accidents of the bread and wine, and thus the outward appearances of the original entities remain the same, it is not possible

in this case for man to conclude on the basis of the information gained through the senses that Christ is now contained under the species. Rather, Thomas affirms, recalling here the general analysis of the relation between supernatural truth and faith offered earlier in the treatise on faith, human knowledge of this truth is available to faith alone, which depends on, and responds to, the revealing word of God, who through the priest in the consecration, announces the new presence of the Lord in the sacrament promised by Christ to his disciples.

In addition to this feature of the contribution of faith to his teaching on real presence, it is quite likely that a secondary role must also be ascribed to faith in the very realization of the substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The change of complete substance into complete substance can, of course, be achieved by God alone. Nevertheless, to effect this change, God employs as His 'separated instrument' the priest who utters the words of consecration. In his discussion of the function of the priest in the Eucharist, Thomas' conviction about the omnipotence of God causes him to conclude that for the actual conversion of substances in this sacrament, the priest who consecrates need not himself possess faith: for valid consecration, all that is required of the priest is that he be able to form the proper intention, so that as a willing instrument

of God, he might offer the sacrament for the purpose for which Christ instituted the Eucharist, as the means of his renewed presence in the world for the sanctification of the Church. Yet, despite the adequacy, in terms of the achievement of Christ's presence, of this explanation of the role of the priest offered in this treatise, other statements elsewhere by Aquinas on the nature of the Church and especially on the 'representative' character of the activity of the priest in the celebration of the sacraments make it doubtful that faith is of no consequence for the correct offering of the Eucharist. For St. Thomas, the Church is the principal vehicle of Christ's continued activity in the world by virtue of its acceptance in faith of his salvific message--the Church can act on Christ's behalf for, as Thomas maintains in many different sections of the Summa, the Church is itself composed by all those who have returned to community with God through their living faith in Christ. Hence, as Thomas states in the treatise on the sacraments in general, when the priest celebrates any of the sacraments, although he principally represents God and Christ, the importance of the Church for the prosecution of God's will in the world means that the priest here also serves as the representative of the Church--indeed, as is obvious, his very right to participate in the celebration of the

sacraments derives from his membership in the historical Church. Consequently, as Thomas observes in this earlier treatise, the intention of the priest to consecrate reflects the intention of the entire Church to work on God's behalf. When the priest himself has living faith, his intention more perfectly reflects that of the Church: just as the Church's intention to offer the sacraments arises from its faith in God, so too this priest's intention bears a similar relation to the faith which he shares with other members of the Church. But, when the celebrant lacks faith, it is necessary that the faith of the Church make up for this deficiency--in order to be faithful to its own nature, no activity prosecuted by it for God can occur without being informed by its faithfulness to His will. Despite his silence on this question in the treatise on the Eucharist, then, the notion that the "faith of the Church" must be expressed in the offering of the Eucharist is in fact probably implicit in Thomas' account of this sacrament: since faith characterizes the activity of the Church, whenever the consecration of the species is achieved, the 'faith of the Church' must be present, whether or not it is actually expressed by any particular celebrant of the sacrament.

On the other hand, as was stressed in the third chapter of this thesis, for St. Thomas, faith is absolutely

essential for the personal appropriation of the grace and other benefits offered by Christ in various ways through the Eucharist. Most importantly, Thomas argues that personal faith is required to guarantee the spiritual reception of these benefits by those who eat the sacrament either in re or simply in voto. In this regard, Thomas' teaching on the necessity of living faith reflects most accurately his general teaching on the reception of grace elsewhere in the Summa. For St. Thomas, that the sacraments infallibly make available the grace which they signify does not mean that all who physically receive the sacraments thereby obtain their power: only those who are already joined to Christ in the living relationship established by faith informed by love can ever attain the benefits promised by Christ to the Church through the sacraments. It is this insistence on the presence of the proper spiritual disposition in those who eat the sacrament which Thomas successfully advances in the treatise on the Eucharist: despite the uniqueness of this sacrament among the sacraments of the New Law caused by the very presence of Christ under the species, Thomas repeatedly demonstrates that real presence, and the possibility of access to Christ's power through contact with him in the sacrament, is advantageous only for those who offer themselves in faith

and love to Christ. This emphasis on the need for faith also finds expression in Thomas' treatment of the secondary ways in which the celebration of the Eucharist can occasion the bestowal of grace. Thus, in terms of the sacrificial nature of this sacrament, Thomas acknowledges that just as the capacity of the true sacrifice of the New Law, the Passion, to sanctify men is realized only by those who are truly living members of the mystical body of Christ by faith, so the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice can benefit men only when they too are bound to Christ by their own living faith. Similarly, the difficult teaching on the possibility of the gaining of merit through Eucharistic reception presupposes that the one who merits eternal life evinces in his eating his own faith and love, for both meritum condigni and meritum congrui demand that this meritorious action of feeding on Christ by faith be freely and lovingly performed by the recipient in conformity with the revealed will of God.

In turn, as was also demonstrated in the third chapter, the delineation of the necessary contribution of faith for the personal appropriation of the benefits of the Eucharist permits St. Thomas to illustrate the centrality of this sacrament in the present spiritual life of the members of the Church. In the first place, that men can encounter Christ in the Eucharist fruitfully by faith enables Aquinas to conclude that this sacrament constitutes the ultimate intensification

in this world of the relationship with Christ established by the initial conversion to God in justification. In initial conversion, the being of the justified is truly transformed. Yet, since in the Eucharist men can meet Christ himself in an even more intimate fashion than is possible in first justification, Thomas concludes that this sacrament acts as the goal to which the reception of the other sacraments, as well as the initial experience of justifying faith, are oriented, for it is in this sacrament that the sanctification and union to Christ initiated by the other sacraments and justification are undergird and confirmed. This conception of the Eucharist as the consummation of the present spiritual life of man is repeated and deepened, secondly, in Thomas' delineation of the relation of the Eucharist to the ultimate goal of all of man's spiritual endeavours, the final vision of God in heaven. In the beatific vision, man will enjoy the immediate possession by direct sight of God and Christ as they truly exist. But, since in the Eucharist, men can experience Christ by faith through the species, Thomas argues, they are thus enabled to anticipate the final vision of God, hence receiving in this provisional realization of their spiritual destiny the strength and impetus to continue in the quest of God. Thus, Thomas' teaching on the role of faith in the Eucharist, coupled with that on

the intrinsic value of Christ's real presence, enables Thomas to conclude to the great importance of this sacrament in contemporary human spirituality.

In the remaining pages of this thesis, our focus now shifts from the Eucharistic thought of St. Thomas to the teaching of the advocates of a more contemporary approach to the question of real presence. Now, it is not feasible to provide here a complete account of the Eucharist and the role of faith in it in the work of such prominent theologians as Schillebeeckx, Schoonenberg and Davis. On the one hand, the understanding of real presence evinced in their writings is difficult, and, indeed, some critics have seriously questioned whether their comprehension of Christ's presence in this sacrament preserves the 'ontological density' of presence which Catholic belief demands in the Eucharist.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in the final pages, the complexity of their treatment of Christ's Eucharistic presence precludes anything more than a brief examination of the main features of their account of this phenomenon. On the other hand, faith has an importance in their work commensurate to that which it enjoys in the theology of Aquinas. Hence, in this chapter, it is similarly impossible to provide a thorough summary of the various facets of the role of faith in their analysis of the Eucharist. Rather, for the purpose of comparison, in view of the difficulties which



we observed in Thomas' teaching in the last chapter, our primary interest here is in the manner in which these modern interpreters of the sacrament have sought to preserve the personal character of the spiritual encounter with the Eucharistic Christ. To facilitate this discussion, the final pages of this chapter will be divided into two main sections. In the first part, we will delineate the important factors which have contributed to the new approach to real presence. Then, in the context of a review of the attempts made by certain of these thinkers to relate their own thought to that of Aquinas, we will conclude the thesis with some brief reflections on the abiding validity, and limitations, of this section of Thomas' theology.

A number of factors have contributed to the formulation of this new solution to the problem of Christ's Eucharistic presence. In the first place, the modern reconstruction of the theology of the Eucharist has been stimulated by a dissatisfaction with important features of the older account of this sacrament. Thus, for example, among the criticisms which he has levelled at Thomas' doctrine, Charles Davis has argued that Thomas' understanding of 'substance' as applied to bread and wine is no longer viable in the light of the insights of modern science.<sup>2</sup> As he makes clear in his discussion of the sacrament, Thomas was

convinced that creations of human art such as bread and wine are each capable of expressing an individual substance in the Aristotelian sense. Hence, on this basis, Thomas further argued that after the conversion of the single substance of the bread into that of Christ's body, and, of the single substance of the wine into that of his blood, the body and blood of Christ remain under their appropriate subsistent appearances for as long as the original substances would have remained, that is, until the destruction of the entities of bread and wine by some substantial corruption. Yet, Davis replies, this analysis of the duration of Christ's presence in the sacrament is questionable on at least two grounds. In the first place, he states, the affirmation that bread is only one substance on the natural level, even in the Aristotelian sense, cannot today be maintained, for it rests on an outmoded, unscientific knowledge of the nature of bread and wine. For Davis, those who insist on retaining in Eucharistic theology the Aristotelian definition of substance as an entity existing in itself and not in another<sup>3</sup> must take into account that scientific analysis of bread, for example, has revealed that bread is not just one (Aristotelian) substance, but in fact "a conglomeration of substances,"<sup>4</sup> of entities which continue to exist in themselves, which through chemical change affecting only a portion of the mass of the original substances, have

been brought into an accidental (in Aristotle's sense) configuration to constitute bread. Thus, since each of the component substances of the bread retain its per se existence, it is therefore not possible to speak of one substance of the bread--rather, as Davis stresses, it is more appropriate to maintain that bread is constructed from a group of substances which retain their individuality.<sup>5</sup> But, moreover, this means that the Thomistic analysis of the duration of Christ's presence under the species is similarly invalidated, for it is no longer possible to speak of Eucharistic presence lasting for as long as the one substance of the bread would have remained. Indeed, that it is a group of substances which for Thomas must be changed into Christ's body enables Davis to insist that the followers of Thomas cannot reasonably affirm that any form of substantial corruption terminates the Eucharistic presence. As Davis observes, the destruction of the bread as an entity in the material world may be achieved simply through the removal of one of its components, say, the starch. But, since bread is merely an accidental union of substances, the destruction of bread in this way does not entail any corruption of the bread's substance, for strictly speaking, the bread is not a substance. Nor, Davis adds, does the displacement of starch cause its substantial destruction--this displacement effects no change or disruption in this existing

unity of activity and therefore even in this respect, there is no substantial corruption. Hence, although the real presence of Christ undoubtedly has ceased because of the destruction of the bread, as this discussion reveals, our improved knowledge of the nature of bread has rendered irrelevant the notion of a substantial corruption (and, indeed, of substance in the Aristotelian sense) for the explanation of the termination of the Eucharistic presence of Christ.

In view of these difficulties, the advocates of the new approach to the Eucharist have understandably been reluctant to follow Thomas' lead in employing the Aristotelian conception of substance in the development of their own treatment of Christ's presence. Yet, as Catholic theologians, they are bound by the doctrinal affirmations of the Church to explain real presence in terms of the change of substance. Hence, to fulfill this requirement, in place of the Aristotelian meaning of substance, Davis and others have retained the word 'substance' in their theory, but use it in a less technical sense, as signifying the 'reality of a thing',<sup>6</sup> as this is revealed not on the natural level, but in reference to men. In support of this more acceptable meaning of 'substance,' whose use they justify in part by historical investigations which demonstrate that Trent and other councils did not use this term in a specifically Aristotelian sense

and hence did not make the teaching of Aristotle part of Catholic belief,<sup>7</sup> they observe that an entity such as bread, although not expressing an individual substance on the natural level, possesses unity and meaning from the purpose for which it is employed by men.<sup>8</sup> That is, from diverse (natural) substances, men create the bread which they normally employ as food, and thus imprint on these originally diverse (and, at the natural level, still separate) substances an overriding unity and meaning manifested in bread's typical use by men. It is in this sense, then, that these theologians continue to speak of a 'trans-substantiation' of the original elements: since bread and wine possess a certain reality for men at one level of their existence, transubstantiation involves God's intervention whereby He transforms inwardly the reality of these human creations and assumes them into His own dimension, in this way facilitating a new relation of the bread to men in which men may seek to realize at a deeper level of their being the now changed importance of these objects for them.

Related to this more contemporary evaluation of the meaning of 'substance' in the Eucharist is a second factor which has re-inforced this new approach to the sacrament, the desire to incorporate into Eucharistic theory a keener sense of the necessary contribution of both God and man to the creation of the 'human' world. On the one hand, as suggested

by the preceeding discussion of 'substance,' basic to human activity is the imposition of meaning on the material things of the world so as to draw these things into new constellations of significance for men. Yet, on the other hand, man's activity in this regard is not at all arbitrary, for his own realization of meaning in the world must be grounded in the innate capacity of these objects to evoke this meaning. For example, bread results from the combination by men of materially diverse elements to create food; but in making bread, men cannot employ just any item--say, chalk in place of flour--but only items suitable for this purpose. This restriction of man in his 'humanization' of the world is imposed by God, who grants to material objects a certain range of potential uses (and, hence, potential meanings) by man.<sup>9</sup> Applied to the Eucharist, then, this understanding of the nature of things and the way in which men 'endow' them with meaning allows the advocates of the newer Eucharistic theory to ascribe an important role to man in realizing Christ's presence in the sacrament while preventing their opponents from decrying the new approach as reducing Christ's real presence to a mere subjective projection onto the species of the desire of the members of the Church for intimacy with Christ. In the Eucharist, it is essential for Christians to realize for themselves by faith the new importance of the

bread and wine after the consecration. In this sense, Eucharistic reception is itself analogous to the normal activity of man in the world. But, the Christian's own realization of the transformed significance of the bread and wine for him is itself based on the word of God pronounced in the consecration, which reveals that what in reality was bread, by God's power is now Christ--that is, man's reception of Christ through the realizing power of bread and wine constitutes the appropriate response of man to the changed reality of the bread, and itself depends on the true change in the original entities through the act of God. Thus, it is only on the basis that Christ is now actually present through the species, that God has 'broadened', as it were, the range of potential uses of bread and wine to include the spiritual gift of Christ, that Christians are able to employ this sacrament as the means of their contact with the living Lord.<sup>10</sup>

Even more important than these 'philosophical' considerations on the nature of things, however, is a third factor in this new doctrine on the Eucharist, the conviction that this sacrament must be viewed in a strictly spiritual context. On the one hand, this means that these theologians are adamant that Eucharistic presence is not an isolated or unique phenomenon, but rather conforms to a pattern

of Christ's 'self-offering' to his own people at other locales in their spiritual life. Thus, for example, these thinkers maintain that Christ's presence to the Church in different dimensions of its existence takes various manifestations--they note in this regard his presence 'in faith,' by his effects through the other sacraments, in the work of the Holy Spirit in creating and sustaining the Church, through the proclamation of the Word<sup>11</sup>--and further argue that viewed against this background, the distinctive value of the Eucharistic presence of Christ, which facilitates his closer, more direct contact with men, is that it successfully intensifies and realizes ever more profoundly Christ's continuous 'presence' in the world. On the other hand, a marked feature of this new theology of the Eucharist is the concentration on the precisely spiritual character and purpose of Christ's presence through the species. In some neo-Scholastic writers, it appears that the concern to explain real presence in terms of the conversion of substances (in Aristotle's sense), and the consequent necessity to justify, for example, the seemingly impossible notion of subsistent accidents, has deflected their attention from the spiritual value of this sacrament for the members of the Church--they have tended to view real presence as simply an end in itself without further relating this presence to the spiritual gifts



which it occasions. In reaction, then, the new Eucharistic theology has correctly stressed that Christ does not come under the elements or identify himself with them for the mere sake of presence, but, rather, effects the transformation of the original entities in order to make himself available to men as the source of their further sanctification--through the sacrament, men encounter Christ who embraces them in love and thus conveys to them his strength.<sup>12</sup>

As this brief summary of the main insights embodied in this new approach to the sacrament suggests, the goal of the new theology of the Eucharist, then, is the description of this sacrament as the venue of the spiritual encounter between Christ and the members of his Church in terms which are meaningful to modern man. Now, certain of the leading proponents of the new understanding of the sacrament--for example, E. Schillebeeckx and P. Schoonenberg--were trained in the thought of St. Thomas, and hence are familiar with important aspects of his theology. Thus, for our purposes, it is interesting to note those places in which these writers have offered their evaluation of the resemblances between their own understanding of the Eucharist and that evinced by Aquinas, who, as has been argued in this thesis, had a similar interest in the spiritual ramifications of the Eucharist. On the whole, despite their reluctance to adopt certain technical features of Aquinas' account of the sacrament--most

obviously, as was noted earlier, the definition of 'substance' in Eucharistic theory in Aristotelian terms-- Schoonenberg and Schillebeeckx have freely acknowledged the manner in which St. Thomas has anticipated some of their own key concerns in the formulation of his doctrine on the Eucharist. Thus, for example, Schoonenberg has observed that both the modern and the Thomistic descriptions have been successful in evading an understanding of Christ's presence in the sacrament in merely physical terms such as that which has marred the teaching of numerous Catholic theologians before and after Aquinas: as Schoonenberg stresses, in the context of defending the 'reality' of his own conception of Eucharistic presence, when he first proposed his doctrine, Thomas too was accused of offering a 'too-spiritual' notion of presence which sacrificed (at least in his detractors' eyes) the 'density' of presence required by Catholic belief.<sup>13</sup> More substantially, Schillebeeckx and Schoonenberg have also been careful to maintain that the ultimate purpose of presence in their teaching, the edification of the Church and the sanctification of its members, was also properly stressed in the teaching of St. Thomas. As Schillebeeckx affirms, especially in his description of the fruits of the sacrament in terms of the traditional formula, res tantum, Thomas himself emphasized that the real presence of Christ is not the end of the sacrament, but the means for the bestowal of that

necessary grace and power which Christ desires to impart to his people through the sacrament. Thus, in this important respect, argues Schillebeeckx, Thomas and the advocates of the modern understanding of the Eucharist share a common cause against those theologians whose interest in defending the older teaching on the mode of the realization of Christ's presence in the Eucharist has prevented them from recognizing adequately the spiritual purpose of the sacrament.<sup>14</sup> Finally, although neither Schillebeeckx nor Schoonenberg explicitly expresses his indebtedness to Aquinas in this regard, in the light of our own investigation of the role of faith in the sacrament according to St. Thomas in the Summa, it is possible to isolate one final way in which Thomas has depicted his thought in a fashion congenial to the modern approach--in both systems, albeit with differing conceptions of the precise activity of faith, these theologians agree in ascribing to faith a crucial function in the personal appropriation of the grace of Christ offered to men in this sacrament.

The favourable evaluation of the thrust of the Eucharistic thought of St. Thomas advanced by Schillebeeckx and Schoonenberg, however, contrasts markedly with the analysis of St. Thomas found in the writings on the Eucharist by Charles Davis. Davis, as was noted earlier, disagrees with the Thomistic advocacy of the Aristotelian notion of substance in his Eucharistic doctrine. Yet, Davis' dissatisfaction with

Aquinas on the Eucharist extends beyond the disagreement about the exact mode in which Christ's presence is realized to the Church. Indeed, Davis has dismissed as irrelevant the entire Thomistic understanding of the Eucharist, arguing that because Thomas describes real presence in terms of the change of substance (understood as a category in the analysis of nature), he is simply incapable of recognizing the religious character of the encounter with Christ through the sacrament: since transubstantiation "in the Thomist theology. . . is an event in the material world,"<sup>15</sup> the definition of the new reality of the bread and wine in these terms is incapable of capturing the religious quality and purpose of God's work in this sacrament, for it isolates Christ's Eucharistic presence from the "purpose that alone explains it and gives it meaning--the establishment of a relation between ourselves and Christ."<sup>16</sup> In another essay, Davis has repeated this basic criticism of Thomas and his followers in slightly different form: as Davis here states, the "basic defect of the Scholastic theology," which convinces one of its "irrelevance" to the understanding of the Eucharist precisely as a sacrament, is that by considering "transubstantiation simply as an event in the physical world, even though not at the perceptible level, without reference to the interpersonal and sacramental encounter with Christ to which it properly belongs," Thomas

has turned his description of transubstantiation "into an essay in supernatural physics," absolutely failing in this way "to explain how Christ offers a personal communion" through his use of the sacramental species.<sup>17</sup> In light of our efforts in the third chapter to delineate the way in which Thomas has sought to relate his description of real presence to the Eucharistic benefits occasioned by this presence, Davis' statements on Aquinas taken at face value can only be described as utterly erroneous: as was demonstrated there, numerous texts can be isolated in the Summa which establish that Thomas himself was quite convinced that the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist was oriented to the sanctification of the faithful. Indeed, Davis' criticisms are initially surprising, for in the development of his own doctrine on the Eucharist, especially in his article "Understanding the Real Presence," Davis himself has related Christ's presence to the bestowal of grace in a manner rather reminiscent of Thomas' own teaching in the Summa.

In reality, it would appear that Davis' dismissal of Aquinas' teaching as irrelevant to the correct understanding of the Eucharist can be traced to a rather selective reading of Aquinas on this sacrament. Now, it is true that St. Thomas employs 'substance' to explain the presence of Christ in the sacrament, and, of course, substance as he uses it normally is a

category valuable for the interpretation of nature. But, it is difficult to see how Davis can conclude on this basis that transubstantiation is thereby viewed by Aquinas as 'an event in the physical world.' In the first place, in St. Thomas, substantial conversion is introduced into the account of the Eucharist precisely because this was conceived as being the only legitimate way in which he could establish a sophisticated version of real presence. But, although he admittedly speaks of a change of substance, Thomas does not therefore limit this change to the sphere of nature or reduce the term of this change to a merely natural object not resident in the truly spiritual dimension of existence--even in St. Thomas, the goal of this change is not a rock or a tree, but rather the living Christ, now residing in heaven, who desires to renew contact with the Church, in fulfillment of his loving promise to the disciples, to sanctify it and to strengthen its members anew for the journey to heaven. Thus, the argument that substantial conversion in Aquinas occurs merely on the natural level because it employs terms appropriate in the first instance to the analysis of nature is hardly convincing--in his use of these notions in his own doctrine, Thomas has with distinction subordinated them to the religious interest of explaining

Christ's real presence as the prerequisite of the most important spiritual event in the life of the Church. Secondly, can it seriously be maintained that Thomas has failed to locate the religious context of Christ's presence, as far as the effects of the sacrament are concerned? Now, it is of course evident that Thomas has not explained the Eucharist precisely as Davis does, that is, by viewing the question of how Christ is present solely in the light of the reasons for this presence. But, although Thomas clearly distinguishes the two questions of the how and the why of presence, treating the former as a problem worthy of consideration in itself before turning to the more thorough explanation of the great value of this sacrament, his failure to think of the sacrament in exactly the same way as Davis hardly constitutes proof that Thomas was ignorant of the spiritual effects for the Church consequent upon Christ's real presence in the sacrament--if this were so, it would have been impossible to write at length, as we did in the third chapter, of the role of faith according to St. Thomas for appropriating the grace, love, forgiveness and power which Christ himself provides the faithful through the worthy reception of the Eucharist and which Thomas insists must be obtained for the attainment of eternal life.

Yet, although we could never subscribe to these extravagant statements suggesting that the doctrine of St. Thomas

on the Eucharist is no longer important for the correct interpretation of this spiritual event, there is, admittedly, a limited sense in which Davis' criticism of Aquinas may be valid. Davis' critique of Aquinas is informed by the keen sense of the personal nature of Christ's presence through this sacrament and the resulting spiritual benefits of the personal encounter of Christ. In St. Thomas, too, especially in his delineation of the necessity of 'living faith' for the spiritual reception of this sacrament, it is clear that the experience of Christ through the Eucharist is meant to modify and indeed transform the very being of the recipient. Yet, as was noted in the last chapter, in Aquinas there is a failure to explain fully the special character of Christ's presence to the faithful as compared to that which is realized by those other, non-spiritual recipients who by virtue of Christ's unfailing existence in the sacrament after the consecration, similarly come in 'contact' with the Lord. In particular, in our discussion of the implications of 'sacramental eating' in the thought of St. Thomas, it was noted that despite conceding that unspiritual eaters also 'meet' Christ through the sacrament, Thomas had not established clearly the grounds on which this eating could be unfruitful--although elsewhere in his theology he assigns great importance to the very presence of Christ to his own, faced here by the unparalleled possibility of an



unfruitful presence of Christ for some recipients of this sacrament, Thomas nevertheless did not employ this opportunity to show explicitly how Christ's presence in this case must differ from his fruitful presence to others. In this regard, although Davis has not referred to this ambiguity in Aquinas in support of his charge, it must be conceded that Thomas' silence about the gradations of Christ's 'presence' which must, in fact, be manifested in the Eucharist, at least makes comprehensible the claim that Thomas has failed to ensure the truly personal nature of fruitful contact with Christ, for this inattention to the necessary task of defining the non-spiritual meeting in this sacrament in turn reflects poorly on his claim for the great importance for the faithful of meeting Christ in the sacrament.

The great strength of the modern approach to the problem of the Eucharistic presence as discussed by Schoonenberg, Schillebeeckx, Davis, and others, is, of course, that it guarantees the personal character of Christ's presence only to the members of the Church and correspondingly makes clear how this differs from his presence with others who receive the sacrament. In particular, these theologians secure the distinctive character of this sacramental encounter for the Church through meditation on the different nuances of 'presence' of which men are capable. For example,

in his treatment of the sacrament, Piet Schoonenberg has differentiated various intensities of presence and applied the insights derived from these reflections to the problems peculiar to Eucharistic theology.<sup>18</sup> As Schoonenberg observes, men can be present in different ways. On the one hand, presence may denote nothing more than a mere existence in physical proximity. Hence, for example, in this case, a stranger is said to be present with another when he enters into reference to the spatial locale of this other. Yet, though the two exist side by side, unless they 'become present' to each other in a more profound way, in a more human manner in which there is mutual openness and self-disclosure, this presence remains at the level, say, of which even inanimate objects are capable.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, Schoonenberg discerns the more pregnant connotation of 'presence' in the case of the presence of, say, lovers to each other. When we discuss this kind of presence, implicit here is the recognition of the interaction and communication which occurs between the lover and the beloved: in these circumstances, there is a 'presence' which transcends the merely physical or spatial (although not necessarily excluding physical proximity) and includes the 'contact' of these two at a deeper, more human and fulfilling level of their being.

Having suggested that 'presence' can have diverse

meanings in different contexts of normal human existence, Schoonenberg then seeks to explain how in fact these 'kinds' of presence are also to be found in an expressly Eucharistic setting. As a theologian committed to the traditional belief of the Church in the unfailing presence of the Lord in this sacrament, Schoonenberg is far from implying that Christ's Eucharistic presence is restricted to the faithful alone: through the consecration, the remaining signs of the bread and wine do in reality manifest the true presence of Christ. But, his understanding of various meanings of 'presence' permits him to distinguish different levels of this presence of Christ, in accordance with the different kinds of possible recipients of the Eucharist. In the first place, then, in the first 'instant' of the sacramental event, Christ takes hold of the original elements, inwardly changing them so as to employ them as the realizing signs of his actual presence for the community. This movement of Christ, then, serves to establish his personal offer of himself to those who come to the altar wishing to renew contact with the Lord. But, says Schoonenberg, though we may legitimately describe this action of Christ by which he becomes available to men through the sacrament as a species of presence, because truly personal presence demands a response and openness to the offer of the other, presence in its deepest meaning occurs in the Eucharist only in the case of those who in turn disclose their dependence

on Christ through the eating of the sacrament in faith and love--'real' presence in this sense demands even in the Eucharist the mutual openness of both members of the encounter. Where this is lacking, however, Christ's presence fails to achieve the intensity of which it is capable--to those who eat perfunctorily and unmotivated by their loving devotion to the Lord and who consequently do not draw the transformed bread and wine into new relation to themselves, Christ is indeed present, but present not in the way that a lover can be 'present' (for this demands mutual activity), but merely in an impersonal way, as it were, in a way analogous to the chance and inconsequential presence of strangers.<sup>20</sup>

In view of the absence of a similar rationale in St. Thomas for the different kinds of 'encounter' in the Eucharist, as was argued in the third chapter, the Thomistic description of the Eucharist stands in need of completion. On the one hand, Thomas has cogently demonstrated the nature of the necessary contribution of man to the personal encounter of Christ in this sacrament: as Thomas states repeatedly in the treatise on the Eucharist, only those to whom God has granted the faith and love by which they may embrace Christ in this sacrament can experience the true depth of power which knowing Christ himself can provide. In this sense, Thomas has firmly established the continuing validity of his teaching

about the Eucharist as the means of the bestowal of saving power--unlike those who see in the celebration of the sacraments an almost 'mechanistic' imposition of grace in which the personal quality of the recipient is irrelevant, Thomas has consistently affirmed, in accordance with the basic principles of the Christian faith, the need for the appropriate personal response of man to these signs in which God displays His love for him. But, on the other hand, Thomas' treatment of the nature of Christ's presence and activity in and through the sacrament must itself be amended, to resolve, in the first place, the difficulty for our understanding of the unfruitful, 'non-personal' encounter with Christ posited by Aquinas without explanation in 'sacramental eating'. More importantly, greater attention must be paid to Christ's own activity through the sacrament in order to demonstrate more fully the truly personal quality of the union between Christ and man which the Eucharist achieves, for only if the modern disciples of St. Thomas incorporate this insight from the newer approach to the Eucharist into the Thomistic framework will they be enabled to disclose most authentically the personal nature of the fruitful meeting of Christ and man in this sacrament to which the other elements of the Eucharistic doctrine of St. Thomas so successfully point.

## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup>This, of course, is not to deny that the thought of Thomas remains an important stimulus for some contemporary theologians. Though he would not advocate a 'return to Thomas' as if Aquinas were the sole authentic or even the most valuable source of theological reflection (see below), the work of perhaps the greatest Catholic theologian of this century, Karl Rahner, discloses his acceptance, in broad outline, of a number of positions which are distinctively Thomist. Particularly interesting for this thesis is Rahner's affirmation, against those who would minimize the human role in the reception of sacramental grace and accentuate the objective power of the sacraments, of the need for 'formed faith' for the fruitful appropriation of all grace, whether granted within or outside the sacramental structure. Rahner has explicitly identified this position as that of St. Thomas in Theological Investigations, volume XIV, pp. 155 and 158; the following passage from his brief article, "The Sacrifice of the Mass," pp. 66-7, indicates, moreover, that Rahner has adopted Thomas' position as his own:

we have to be fairly clear about the relationship between sacrament, opus operatum, the objective cult-action of the community on the one hand, and subjective devotion and personal choice on the other. It is a truth of faith, not a piece of modern subjectivism, that the opus operatum, the sacrament, the cult-action, has its meaning, value significance and effectiveness only in so far as it is integrated in the person's own indispensable, irreplaceable subjectivity--at least when the person, not being an infant, is capable of such acts. One can receive grace through a sacrament only if, and in proportion as, one disposes oneself, by grace, to receive that grace. Sacraments are not there to act as substitutes for what needs to be subjectively performed by a person, for his faith, his conversion, his internal consent to God and his grace, his acceptance

of existence in its subjection to death, his hope in life in the midst of death; neither to substitute for them or to make them less exacting. That is not the nature of the sacraments.

See also pp. 68 and 69 of the same article for similar statements.

Although some seem content merely to accept Luther's polemic against the errors of the so-called Aristotelian church as an accurate historical assessment of the theology of Aquinas, among Protestants, too, there are those who appreciate the theological achievement of St. Thomas. For example, in his book, The Future of Roman Catholic Theology, pp. 113-4, George Lindbeck has disclosed his awareness of the central thrust of Aquinas' thought. Writing about the need to acknowledge Scripture as normative for Christian faith and theology, Lindbeck points to those modern thinkers, Protestant and Catholic, whose theologies are one in the "devout and unabashed attachment to the full range of biblical claims, however incredible they may seem to either ancient or modern man." Thus, Lindbeck continues, theologians such as Rahner and Barth, Pannenberg and Metz,

are genuinely united on the dogmatic level by their adherence to a common revelational center. They proceed, one might say, not by accomodating revelation to the new, but conversely, by interpreting the new worlds of thought and action in terms of revelation. Thus they are quite unlike the Gnostics, Latin Averroists, many Renaissance humanists, nineteenth-century liberals, and twentieth-century radical theologians who attenuate or mutilate the basic Christian affirmations in order to make them believable in terms of some contemporary procrustean framework of thought. Instead they stand in the line of the Greek and Latin Fathers, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and their successors, who reshape whatever convictions they may have about the world, whether Platonic, Aristotelian, late medieval, or modern evolutionary in the light of their primary commitment to the reality and truth which is in Jesus Christ. They strive to 'compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ' (II Cor. 10:5), and in so doing find themselves drawing closer together, not in an impoverishing uniformity, but in an enriching diversity of perspectives within what is recognizably the same faith.

## CHAPTER ONE

<sup>1</sup>In ST I-II, 113, 2c, Thomas states explicitly that through sin, man offends God.

<sup>2</sup>In the rather descriptive phrase of I-II, 113, 1 ob 3, through sin, 'someone is far from God;' see also I-II, 113, 2c, where Thomas says that human sin causes a man to fall away from God's unchanging love.

<sup>3</sup>In I-II, 109, 7c, Thomas describes the relation between these two disorders which sin entails in his explanation of how sin spoils man's natural goodness: "The goodness of nature is spoiled by the disordering of man's nature, when his will is no longer subject to God; for once this order is taken away, the consequence is that the whole nature of the sinful man becomes disordered." See also I-II, 113, 1 ad 1, where Thomas writes that every sin implies a disorder in that mind (mens) which is not subject to God.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas distinguishes, in II-II, 7, 2 ad 3, a natural or congenital weakness of the human intellect in this world from that 'darkness' which envelopes the mind on account of sin.

<sup>5</sup>Thomas mentions the impurity which follows on subservience, in love, to the temporal in II-II, 7, 2c.

<sup>6</sup>For example, in I-II, 111, 2c, Thomas equates justification with healing the soul and rendering it pleasing to God.

<sup>7</sup>I-II, 113, 1c.

<sup>8</sup>I-II, 109, 8c: "In our present life, this healing [of grace] is brought about in the mind (mens), although fleshly desires are not yet wholly renewed; so Paul, speaking in the person renewed, says, 'With my mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin.' [Rom. 7:25] In this state man can refrain from mortal sin,



which is an affair of the reason . . . . But he cannot refrain from every venial sin, owing to the spoiling of his lower sensual instinct; the reason can indeed restrain individual movements of its desire (and this is why they have the character of sinfulness and voluntariness), but not all of them: while he tries to resist one, perhaps another makes its attack, nor again can the reason always be on guard to avoid these movements."

<sup>9</sup>II-II, 4, 4 ad 3: "Grace causes faith not only when faith begins to exist for the first time in anyone, but as long as it perdures . . . God continuously causes a person to be justified, even as the sun causes the air to be lighted. Grace does not, therefore, effect less when it comes to a believer than when it comes to an unbeliever; in both it causes faith, strengthening and finishing it in the one, creating it for the first time in the other."

<sup>10</sup>I-II, 108, 1 ad 2: Since "the grace of the Holy Spirit is a kind of interior disposition infused into us which inclines us to act rightly, it makes us do freely whatever is in accordance with grace, and avoid whatever is contrary to it." See also I-II, 110, 3 ad 3, where grace is described as "a kind of habitual state which is presupposed by the infused virtues [i.e., faith, hope and charity], as their origin and root."

<sup>11</sup>M. G. Lawler, "Grace and Free Will in Justification: A Textual Study in Aquinas," p. 624. Lawler's examination in this article of the treatment of the relationship of grace and free will in the process of justification in the Thomistic corpus reveals a shift in emphasis in the later Thomas. Although Lawler denies that Thomas was ever a semi-Pelagian (p. 617), it seems evident that his earlier work (De Veritate, the Commentary on the Sentences) tended to stress the human contribution to justification, e.g., man's preparation for the reception of grace. But, because of a greater acquaintance with Paul and a keener knowledge of Augustine's conflict with the Pelagians, by the time of the composition of the pertinent parts of the Summa, Lawler notes (pp. 619-20), Thomas felt it was more necessary to emphasize the divine aspect of this process. In particular, as we shall shortly see in the text, Thomas now came to affirm that the movement of free will required of man in conversion was itself the gift of God, the result of God's interior moving of man to faith.

<sup>12</sup>See I-II, 109, 7c.

<sup>13</sup>St. Thomas has formulated well the idea of the unmerited nature of the love which God expresses in the justification of the individual in I-II, 110, 1c, where he contrasts the differing motives or occasions of human and divine love or 'grace': "we must note a difference between God's grace and man's. For since the goodness of the creature issues from the divine will, it is out of God's love by which he wills good for the creature that any goodness arises in the creature. Man's will, on the other hand, is moved by goodness already existing in things; and so it is that man's love does not wholly cause the thing's goodness, but presupposes it either in whole or in part. It is clear, therefore, that upon any expression of God's love there follows a goodness in the creature caused at some given time . . . The way in which this goodness differs allows us to notice a difference in the kinds of God's love for his creatures. One is a general love . . . by this he bestows natural being on created things. The other is a special love, by which he draws the rational creature above its natural condition to have a part in the divine goodness. And it is by this love that he is said to love someone simply speaking; because by this love God simply speaking wills for the creature that eternal good which is himself."

<sup>14</sup>I-II, 113, 3c.

<sup>15</sup>I-II, 113, 5c.

<sup>16</sup>In addition to the passage from the treatise on faith cited in note 9 above, there are many passages in the treatise on grace in which Thomas makes this point. For example, I-II, 111, 2 ad 2: "God does not justify us without us, since while we are being justified, we consent to God's justice by a movement of free choice. But that movement is not the cause but the effect of grace. Thus the whole operation belongs to grace;" I-II, 109, 6 ad 4: "It is the part of man to prepare his mind [for grace], since he does this by his free decision; yet he does not do this without the assistance of God moving him and drawing him to himself;" I-II, 109, 7 ad 1: "when man tries to rise from sin by a free decision moved by God, he receives the light of justifying grace;" see also I-II, 112, 2c and 4c; and, 113, 3c.

<sup>17</sup>P. Riga, "The Act of Faith in Aquinas and Augustine," p. 167, observes that this emphasis on the assent to revelation as itself the pure grace of God was a dominant theme in the thought of Augustine on faith.

<sup>18</sup>For example, the first part of this description is found in II-II, 2, 1 ad 3, where Thomas supplements the description of this act given in the corpus (i.e., believing is 'to think or ponder with assent'): "The mind of the one believing settles upon the one side of a question not in virtue of his reason but in virtue of his will. Therefore assent is understood in the definition as an act of mind in so far as the mind is brought to its decision by the will." For the earlier formulation of the last part of this description, see, e.g., II-II, 2, 5 ad 1, where Thomas notes that it is only when aided by grace that one can give assent to what is otherwise beyond one's natural powers; in this passage, Thomas is referring specifically to belief in the articles of faith.

<sup>19</sup>II-II, 1, 4; see also II-II, 2, 1c.

<sup>20</sup>II-II, 2, 9 ad 3.

<sup>21</sup>II-II, 2, 5 ad 1.

<sup>22</sup>In II-II, 6, 1, Thomas considers in greater detail whether faith can be said to be infused by God. In the corpus, Thomas organizes his material in terms of what he calls the 'two requisites' of faith. In the first place, for faith it is necessary that there be something which is proposed for our belief. In this regard, God is necessarily the cause of faith, for it is only insofar as God has revealed the things of faith, which surpass our understanding, that belief is possible. Secondly, there is the assent of faith itself, of which there are two types of cause. First, there is the cause which persuades from without, as, for example, a preacher's exhortation to faith. Such a cause, however, is not sufficient to cause assent: after all, though both have heard the same preaching, one man believes while another does not. Therefore, there must be at the same time a second kind of cause, "an inner cause, one that influences a person inwardly to assent to the things of faith." At this point in his analysis, Thomas refers to the Pelagians, who thought this 'inner cause' to be the free will alone and who therefore taught that the beginning of faith is from us alone, i.e., it is from our own resources that we are ready to assent to matters of faith. For Thomas, "this is a false doctrine . . . [For] since in assenting to the things of faith a person is raised above his own nature, he has this assent from a supernatural source influencing him; this source is God." Hence, Thomas

concludes, "the assent of faith . . . has as its cause God, moving us inwardly through grace."

<sup>23</sup>I-II, 113, 8c.

<sup>24</sup>See, e.g., I-II, 113, 2 ad 2: "It is out of the divine love that sin is not imputed to someone by God."

<sup>25</sup>That love must be part of the human response to God in justification derives from the fact that man's will, as well as his intellect, is involved in conversion to God. Hence, in addition to the virtue (faith) perfective of the mind in this return to God, love of man's true end (God), which is perfective of the will, must also be granted to man by grace and play a part in this process. Thomas mentions the necessity of human charity informing faith in initial justification in I-II, 113, 4 ad 1. In the treatise on faith, Thomas develops the idea of the role of charity in maintaining a fruitful relationship to God in his analyses of 'formed' and 'unformed' faith. Formed faith, for example, is that faith which is formed or extrinsically shaped and determined by love; love here serves to direct and complete the act of faith. For more complete discussions of the necessity of the habits which dispose properly both the mind and the will in faith, see II-II, 4, 2c and 3c; and, of the difference between this so-called 'formed' faith and 'unformed' faith (in which the habit of charity does not perfect the will and hence is absent from faith), see II-II, 4, 4 and 6, 2.

<sup>26</sup>I-II, 113, 4 ad 3; see also, e.g., II-II, 2, 7, where Thomas states in what sense explicit belief in the mystery of Christ is a matter of salvation for all people; and, II-II, 2, 8, where the need for explicit faith in the Trinity is explained (corpus: "Without faith in the Trinity there can be no belief in the Incarnation.")

<sup>27</sup>We can find this idea of the Church articulated at a number of points in his treatise on the Eucharist. Thus, for example, in III, 74, 1c, among the reasons for affirming the suitability of bread and wine as the matter of the Eucharist, Thomas asks us to consider the effect of this sacrament in terms of the whole Church 'which is constituted from all the diverse faithful' (totius Ecclesiae . . . quae constituitur ex diversis fidelibus), just as bread is made from many different grains. See also III, 80, 2 ad 2, where Thomas explains that men and angels share the fellowship of the mystical body, but in

different ways, men through faith, angels through manifest vision. For this idea in the treatise on faith, see II-II, 1, 9 ad 3, where Thomas says that the Church is 'bound together through faith' (. . . totius Ecclesiae, quae per fidem unitur). Y. Congar in his works especially stresses the importance of faith in the determination of Thomas' understanding of the Church. See, for example, his article, "'Ecclesia' et 'Populus (Fidelis)'" dans l'Ecclésiologie de S. Thomas," p. 162, where he suggests that Thomas wished to define the Church as 'congregatio (coetus, societas, collegium, communio) fidelium,' and, his earlier study, "The Idea of the Church in St. Thomas Aquinas," p. 337, n. 10, where Congar affirms that "for St. Thomas, the substance of the mystical Body is living faith."

In the latter article, Congar has also explicitly noted the basically Christocentric character of the Church in Aquinas on p. 340; here, he observes that God has ordained that man's return to God occurs principally in Christo. A. Dulles, "The Spiritual Community of Man: The Church According to Saint Thomas," p. 133, has expressed his acceptance of this aspect of Congar's analysis of Thomas.

<sup>28</sup>C. O'Neill, "St. Thomas on Membership of the Church," has described well the function of the visible Church as the agent of God's saving action in the world. O'Neill's article was occasioned by his desire to defend Thomas' ecclesiology against those who would dismiss it as conceiving the Church as only an assembly of believers drawn together by grace (p. 91). To defend Thomas in this regard, O'Neill tries to demonstrate the relation between the historical manifestation of the mystical body in the state of the New Law, the Catholic Church, to the mystical body itself which, properly speaking, is constituted only by the redeemed and, moreover, includes all those who have been restored to fellowship with God through Christ regardless of the date of their birth (that is, it includes even those men of the state of the Old Law who were saved through their faith in Christ). On the whole, O'Neill's work here is valuable; especially interesting is his contention that it is the sacraments of the New Law which constitute the major new factor in the lives of the members of the mystical body after Christ. (As we will shortly see in the text, this is so because these sacraments, as distinct from those of the Old Law, are able to communicate Christ's grace to those believing in him.) Compared to others who have ventured to write about the sacraments and grace in Aquinas, two aspects of O'Neill's discussion are especially gratifying. First,

his stress in this way on the sacraments has not caused him to lose sight of the fact that in the treatise on grace, the sacraments are relegated to a secondary level (see, e.g., p. 103): as Thomas notes in the majority of the relatively few references to the sacraments in this part of the Summa, the grace of the Holy Spirit is the principal feature of the New Law; externals such as the sacraments come under the New Law only insofar as they dispose men to this grace (see I-II, 107, 1 ad 3; 108, 1c and 2c). Secondly, despite his appreciation of the sacraments, O'Neill also displays some awareness of the role of faith in the Thomistic soteriology, acknowledging, for example, that the "association with Christ is achieved primarily by faith" (p. 117). As suggested by certain statements later in his article (p. 120), however, O'Neill tends to view the incorporation by faith into Christ as a merely mental incorporation requiring completion (indeed, 'fleshing out') through the later reception of the sacraments. Although it would be rash to deny that Thomas acknowledged a legitimate role of the sacraments in intensifying and maintaining the relation to Christ, and, though Thomas expresses himself at times in a way which would seem to warrant this elevation of the sacraments to equality with faith, it hardly seems adequate to characterize justifying faith and the union to Christ achieved through it as just 'mental' in Aquinas, as if this bond to Christ were not life-giving and complete in itself.

<sup>29</sup>It is in this context, perhaps, that we can best understand Thomas' statement, in III, 64, 2 ad 3, that the Church has been instituted and constructed through faith and the 'sacraments of the faith,' which sacraments flowed from Christ's side on the cross.

<sup>30</sup>See, e.g., III, 61, 3c: sacraments "constitute certain sensible signs of invisible things by which man is sanctified."

<sup>31</sup>See, e.g., I-II, 108, 2c: "since we cannot obtain grace of ourselves but only through Christ, the Lord himself instituted by his own act the sacraments by which we obtain grace;" in this text, Thomas then proceeds to enumerate the seven sacraments. In I-II, 108, 2 ad 2, he adds that since grace is from Christ alone, it was necessary that these sacraments be instituted by Christ himself.

<sup>32</sup>Thomas has provided a good summary of the 'instrumental' nature of the sacraments in III, 62, 5c;

here, he states that the humanity of Christ is the conjoined instrument of his divinity, whose power is manifested in the sacraments, whereas the sacraments are separated instruments of his humanity, which further convey the power of the divinity. A similar discussion of instrumentality may also be found in I-II, 112, 1 ad 1, in which Thomas notes the instrumentality of Christ's humanity, and ad 2, in which he mentions that of the sacraments. For the basic meaning of 'instrument' as used here, see III, 62, 3 ad 1: grace is 'in' the sacrament as in an instrument, inasmuch as an "instrument is said to be the tool by means of which some work is performed;" and, III, 62, 1 ad 2: an instrument works as an instrument when "it produces its effects not of its own power but in the power of the principal agent."

There are numerous passages in his general discussion of the sacraments in which Thomas articulates his belief that the grace of the sacraments is precisely that which originates in Christ's work on the Cross; see, e.g., III, 62, 5 ad 2.

<sup>33</sup>See I-II, 112, 1 ad 2: "in the sacraments of the New Law, which have their source in Christ, grace is indeed caused instrumentally by the sacraments themselves, but the principal agent is the power of the Holy Spirit working in them." It is in the light of a passage such as this that we can best evaluate the criticism of Thomas' sacramental thought made by D. Tappeiner, "Sacramental Causality in Aquinas and Rahner: Some Critical Thoughts:" according to Tappeiner, Thomas' notion of sacramental causality is deficient precisely because it makes no mention of the necessary contribution of the Holy Spirit (pp. 246, 256-7). Indeed, Tappeiner even goes so far as to say that judging from his account of the sacraments, it is as if St. Thomas had never heard of the Holy Spirit (p. 247). There will be occasion to note the role of the Holy Spirit specifically with reference to the Eucharistic conversion in the second chapter.

<sup>34</sup>See, e.g., E. Sauras, "Thomistic Soteriology and the Mystical Body." Sauras accomplishes the remarkable feat of describing incorporation into the mystical body of Christ without noting at all the role of faith in this process; indeed, as far as can be determined from a careful reading of this article, the word 'faith' itself appears only once (p. 549), and just in passing, in this entire account. The general tenor of this article, with its great emphasis on the power of the sacraments as causes of grace, is suggested well by the following passage: according to Sauras,

the redemption has two aspects: the first is called objective redemption or redemption effected; the second is called subjective or applied redemption. The first was realized by the works which Christ performed while in the world; the second, by the sacraments which He instituted to apply to us the fruits of objective redemption. (pp. 544-5)

This neglect of the role of faith in Thomas' account of the bestowal of grace causes Sauras to make a serious error in interpretation later in his article in his discussion of the grace given in the Eucharist: in Sauras' interpretation, "when the body of Christ comes in contact with ours there is an intimate communication of grace because for us it is not body, but 'spiritus vivificans.'" (p. 567) Actually, it is quite possible that there are in fact two things wrong with this statement: not only does it neglect to follow Thomas in stressing the necessity of faith for fruitful reception, but perhaps it also ascribes to him a too-physical conception of real presence. As should become clear in the second chapter, the body of Christ as it is 'in' the Eucharist can hardly be said 'to come into contact' with our bodies.

<sup>35</sup> See the note to the Introduction.

<sup>36</sup> In addition to the discussion of the difference between the sacraments of the Old and the New Law which follows shortly in the text (where this point will become more manifest), I-II, 113, 3 ad 1 also makes clear that the reception of justifying grace in the sacraments (whether in baptism or in one of the others), always requires a movement of free choice on the part of one capable of such a movement; it is only in the case of an infant or of one who has never had this capacity that the sacramental act alone (actually, God working through the sacrament) suffices to justify and to bestow grace.

<sup>37</sup> Much of the following discussion is based on III, 62, 6.

<sup>38</sup> III, 62, 6c. As Thomas adds in the same place, however, that the Passion had not yet occurred did not prevent the men of the Old Law from attaining faith in Christ and his Passion, for even before the Passion, they could conceive an idea of it which could move them to the faith in the Christ to come.

<sup>39</sup> See III, 61, 3c.



<sup>40</sup>A fuller description of the faith of the men living in the state of the Old Law and their inclusion in the mystical body is available at a number of points in the Summa. For example, in the treatise on faith, there is the discussion of whether explicit belief in the mystery of Christ is a matter of salvation for all people (II-II, 2, 7); in the corpus, Thomas suggests that the leaders or teachers of the Old Law had an explicit knowledge of this mystery, whereas the common people had only an implicit faith which was attested in their ceremonies. That some men of the Old Law were justified by their faith in Christ and received grace is also stated in the treatise on grace; see, e.g., I-II, 106, 1 ad 3 and 107, 3 ad 1. Finally, for a good statement in the treatise on the sacraments of Thomas' teaching in this regard, see III, 61, 3 ad 2: "it has always been through faith in the future coming of Christ that men have been justified."

<sup>41</sup>See, e.g., III, 61, 3c and 4c, and also III, 63, 4 ad 3.

<sup>42</sup>III, 64, 3c; 62, 5 ad 2.

<sup>43</sup>In III, 62, 6c and 6 ad 1, Thomas makes the basic point that justifying grace is now offered (also) in the sacraments; in this sense, this marks an advance on the Old Law, where faith alone justified. It would be a misuse of this particular article, however, to conclude from its recognition of the new ability of the sacraments to contribute to justification that Thomas means for the sacraments to replace faith or even that the sacraments were now acknowledged to be a 'complement of faith' in the sense that they have been assigned an equal role to that of faith in justification, separate and self-contained and independent of the continuance of faith. All Thomas wants to establish in this article is that these sacraments, too, now are able to 'conjoin' us to the Passion; he does not suggest that this means anything more than that God's grace is now definitely offered (also) within the sacramental structure. To state this differently, when he says that they 'conjoin' men to the Passion, this does not mean that they cause the grace of the Passion to be in the recipient. To draw this conclusion from this article (or, rather: to read this conclusion into the article) would be to contradict the passages mentioned in the preceeding note as well as those from the specific treatise on the Eucharist which will form the basis of the

third chapter. As Thomas says in ad 1, it has always been by faith in the Passion that men have been justified; in the era of the New Law, moreover, it is also possible for the sacraments to contribute to this process, not as usurping the function of faith, but as the loci of God's regular offer of that grace (which is always necessary on account of continued sin) which may be appropriated alone by faith.

<sup>44</sup>Ad 6 of this article is especially important for this thesis, for, as far as it has been possible to determine, this is the only instance in his treatise on the Eucharist in which Thomas has referred to the twofold function of faith, as outlined in the Introduction, in the same text.

<sup>45</sup>The Eucharist is at times designated the 'sacrament of charity' because, as shall be seen in the third chapter, charity is both required on the part of the worthy recipient and is itself increased through reception of this sacrament; in ad 6, Thomas gives as the justification of this designation that the Eucharist symbolizes charity and brings it about.

<sup>46</sup>"The Eucharist is called 'the sacrament of faith,' in the sense of being an object of faith; it is only by faith that we can know that the blood of Christ is in this sacrament in actual fact. And, also, the passion of Christ justifies us through our faith in it." [. . . dicitur 'sacramentum fidei', quasi fidei objectum: quia quod sanguis Christi secundum rei veritatem sit in hoc sacramento, sola fide tenetur. Ipsa etiam passio Christi per fidem justificat.]

## CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup>In his treatise on the sacraments in general, Thomas reveals his own understanding of the value of signs and of the method by which objects, on account of their natural characteristics, come to be chosen for use in Christ's sacraments. For example, in III, 60, 2c, Thomas stresses the informational quality of signs: signs are objects in common use whose meanings are evident to men and through the ascertainment of which meanings, men can gain greater knowledge of realities less familiar to them; in other words, signs are given to men so that they might come to know what they do not know through things they do. Thus, in keeping with this analysis, Thomas writes later in this same question (III, 60, 4c) that through sensible signs, men obtain knowledge of intelligible realities; for this idea, see also III, 61, 1c.

The choice of specific objects for inclusion in the sacraments reflects this conception of the natural appropriateness of these objects to act as signs. Hence, in III, 64, 2 ad 2, Thomas argues that certain sensible objects are able to signify aspects of sacred reality because of such a natural aptitude--these objects in their normal use, that is, suggest a spiritual truth associated with a sacrament (e.g., the use of water is apt for signifying the spiritual cleansing of baptism on account of its use in physical washing). Nevertheless, in this same text, Aquinas discloses his awareness that physical objects are in themselves ambiguous, apt for the signification of many different ideas (e.g., water naturally can suggest both cleansing and the quenching of thirst). Thus, Thomas concludes by asserting that, in the final analysis, despite the natural propensity of these things to signify, it is the work of God which ultimately endows, as it were, each thing with its proper signification in any given sacrament: that is, it is by the divine institution of the sacrament that these objects receive a 'special determination' which identifies (and hence restricts that object to) that particular meaning which the use of the object in the sacrament is meant to convey.

<sup>2</sup>III, 74, 1c. Elsewhere in his discussion Thomas has similarly designated this sacrament 'the sacrament of Church unity'; see, for example, III, 73, 4c, where Thomas

justifies the name communio for this sacrament on the grounds that one of its results is the unity of the Church; III, 80, 5 ad 2, where, in the context of explaining why the mortal sin of unbelief prevents receiving the effects of this sacrament, Thomas calls it the sacramentum ecclesiasticae unitatis; III, 82, 2 ad 3, where he states that this sacramentum unitatis ecclesiasticae requires that multi sunt unum in Christo (echoing Galatians 3:28); and, III, 82, 9 ad 2, where he affirms that the unitas corporis mystici is the fructus corporis veri percepti. This notion will be examined in more detail in the third chapter.

<sup>3</sup>For this basic idea, see III, 73, 4c, where Thomas explains that this sacrament is called viaticum because it keeps us on the way to heaven inasmuch, as ad 2 adds, as the Eucharist acts as the 'restorative' par excellence enabling us to continue (in the words of ob 2) in via praesentis vitae.

<sup>4</sup>In III, 74, 1c, Thomas makes the point that bread and wine were selected for sacramental use on account of the fact that they constitute the most common food of men. In III, 74, 3c, he argues that it is in particular wheaten bread which must here be used for the same reason, that is, because it is the kind of bread most men eat and in the sacraments, men use that which is commonly used for like purpose; in III, 74, 5c, he argues that in addition to the fact that it best signifies the spiritual 'joy' (laetitia) occasioned by worthy reception, it is specifically grape-wine which should be used as the matter of the Eucharist, for this is the kind of wine most men drink.

<sup>5</sup>III, 79, 1c.

<sup>6</sup>III, 73, 5c.

<sup>7</sup>In addition to these descriptions of the signifying relation of the Eucharist to the Passion taken from III, 73, 5c, see also the following passages: III, 73, 5 ad 3, where Thomas explains that the Lord instituted the sacrament at the Last Supper that it might in future be a memoriale Dominicae passionis; III, 79, 1c, where Thomas states that grace is offered in the Eucharist because, among other reasons, the fact that the Passion is here represented (repraesentatur) suggests that the effects of the Passion are communicated by this sacrament (see also,

e.g., III, 81, 3 ad 1, where the active voice of this verb is used); and, III, 79, 6c, where he says that reception can protect the recipient from future sins inasmuch as he is henceforth protected from demonic attack by this quoddam signum of the Passion, by which the demons were conquered. III, 74, 3 ob 1 repeats the description of the Eucharist (in III, 73, 5c) as the rememorativum of the Passion.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas underlines the value of two species for signifying the Passion in a number of passages. For example, in III, 74, 1c, among the reasons advanced in support of viewing the use of bread and wine as reasonable, Thomas notes that in the Passion Christ's blood was separated from his body; hence, Thomas continues, in this memoriale Dominicae passionis, it is good that two species are also taken up separately, the bread being the sacramentum corporis, the wine, the sacramentum sanguinis. III, 76, 2 ad 1 repeats this notion in the context of explaining why, despite Thomas' teaching on concomitance, two species are not superfluous. As will be seen later in this chapter, the idea of concomitance suggests that when two things are joined in reality, wherever one is, the other also must be. Applied to the present case, this means that even though no mention of the blood of Christ is made in the form of the consecration of the bread, since Christ's body is not apart from its blood in reality, after the conversion of the bread into his body, Christ's blood is also present under the species of the bread, albeit only by concomitance and not as the direct term of the conversion; and, the same applies to the consecration of the wine, the body now also becoming present by concomitance after the conversion of the wine into the blood. In view of this teaching articulated in III, 76, 2c, III, 76, 2 ad 1 must try to defend the use of two species; after all, as ob 1 argues, if Christ's blood is already present after the consecration of the bread, what point can there be in consecrating the wine? In reply, Thomas refers again to the relation of the Eucharist to the Passion as its sign: the use of the second species is valid for the two species serve to represent Christ's Passion, in which his blood was separated from his body.

Further justification specifically of the separate consecration of the wine can be found, e.g., in III, 78, 3 ad 2 and, especially, III, 78, 3 ad 7. In ob 7, in the context of the attempt to determine the suitability of the second of the eucharistic forms, objection is made to the explicit mention of the Passion only in the consecratory form of the wine; since the whole sacrament is a memoriale of the Passion, there is no greater reason for mentioning

the Passion in the form of the consecration of the blood and not in that of the body. In ad 7, Thomas simply stresses that this separate consecration of the blood more expressly represents (expressius repraesentat) the Passion; hence, concludes Thomas, explicit mention is legitimately made in this form of the Passion and its fruits and not in the earlier form.

<sup>9</sup> III, 77, 7c. This particular signification of the fractio of the host, along with two others, is repeated in III, 83, 5 ad 7.

<sup>10</sup> III, 73, 4c. See also III, 73, 4 ad 3: hoc sacramentum dicitur 'sacrificium' inquantum repraesentat ipsam passionem Christi; and, III, 79, 7c, where Thomas argues that the Eucharist has the nature of a sacrificium inasmuch as in the Eucharist, repraesentatur passio Christi. III, 83, 1 is also extremely important in regard to the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist for Thomas here asks whether in this sacrament Christ is sacrificed (immoletur). In the body of the article, he replies that indeed the Eucharist is properly called the immolatio Christi, for two reasons. The second is that through this sacrament, the effects of the Passion are received. The first is that the celebration of this sacrament is an 'image' (imago) which represents Christ's Passion, which is the true sacrifice (imago quaedam est repraesentativa passionis Christi quae est vera eius immolatio), and images are often called by the name of that which they reflect. As will be seen below in the text, it is also possible to call this sacrament a 'sacrifice' by virtue of the fact that in it, the Christ who was sacrificed is contained. Thus, as should be evident, neither way of justifying the ascription of a sacrificial nature to this sacrament suggests anything even remotely implying the ever new or recurring death of Christ in the offering of the Mass; indeed, rather than denying the efficacy of the Passion by his teaching, Thomas' descriptions of the Eucharist as a 'sacrifice' serve only to point men anew to the true source of their new existence. In chapter three, there will be occasion to note the role of faith in receiving the grace made available by this sacrifice of the New Law.

<sup>11</sup> III, 78, 1c; III, 80, 1 ad 1.

<sup>12</sup> III, 80, 12 ad 2.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas makes this point in III, 79, 7 ad 1; in this article, Thomas notes that it is because the Eucharist

is also a sacrifice that it can benefit even those who do not actually receive it.

<sup>14</sup>III, 75, 2 ad 2. In this extremely important article in which Thomas states explicitly a number of ideas which dominate his discussion of the real presence, Thomas is discussing whether the substances of the bread and wine remain after the consecration. The answer given in the corpus, and supported by four arguments, is in the negative; indeed, the first argument (to be examined in detail in the text below), has stated that only by a conversion of substances can Christ begin to exist in the Eucharist. The second objection of this article, however, has argued that these original substances must remain, on the basis of the parallel with the other sacraments: in these other sacraments employing a material element, the consecration does not alter the substance of the material element. In response, Thomas notes in ad 2 why it is that in this sacrament as opposed to the others, the material substance does not remain: because these other sacraments do not contain Christ himself (realiter), as does the Eucharist.

<sup>15</sup>III, 73, 1 ad 3.

<sup>16</sup>Given the tendency of the faithful in Catholic church history to refrain from eucharistic reception as a sign of piety and respect for this central sacrament, it is crucial to clarify here Thomas' basic point. What Thomas means, as will become clearer in the text below, is that the Eucharist constitutes a unique case, for by the consecration alone (apart from the reception of the sacrament) the sacrament is complete. This is so because the consecration realizes the presence of Christ himself in the sacrament; whether or not he is in turn received by the faithful does not alter the fact of his real presence in the sacrament. On the other hand, the other sacraments serve only a 'transitive' function--their sole task is to apply the grace and other gifts of the Passion to men. Thus, inasmuch as they do not contain Christ himself but only convey his power, they are completed only when they actually 'pass along' this power to those for whom it is intended, the recipients of the sacraments. Nevertheless, as has been stated, from this fact, Thomas does not dismiss the reception of the Eucharist as irrelevant to the life of the Church, nor, indeed, does he wish to separate the further use of this sacrament from its completion in the consecration--after all, inasmuch as it too is a sacrament instituted ultimately for the bestowal of grace, Thomas

does not mean to suggest that the use of the Eucharist is opposed to its very nature. Thus, for example, apart from the texts to be studied in the third chapter which will provide ample evidence of the tremendous importance assigned by St. Thomas to the worthy reception of this sacrament for the spiritual life, see III, 73, 2c: here, in the context of his attempt to explain how it is that what is materially many is yet only one sacrament, Thomas defines the 'purpose' (fines) of this sacrament to which it is ordered as the spiritual refreshment of men.

<sup>17</sup>See, e.g., III, 82, 4 ad 2.

<sup>18</sup>See, e.g., III, 75, 1c.

<sup>19</sup>A brief review of the contents of this treatise will reveal the importance of this problem for the organization of Thomas' treatment of the Eucharist in the Summa. In the first place, the first half of the treatise is devoted directly to the discussion of real presence and Thomas' attempt to resolve the difficulties occasioned by his account of this presence. Thus, after some preliminary considerations in q. 73 about, among other things, the sacramentality of the Eucharist, its institution by Christ and its symbolic value, in q. 74, Thomas turns to the examination of the terminus a quo of the eucharistic conversion, the bread and wine, demonstrating here, for example, the suitability of these elements to constitute the basic matter of this sacrament. In qq. 75 and 76, which together form the heart of this treatise, Thomas provides his own answer to the problem of real presence. Hence, in q. 75, he depicts the manner in which the presence of Christ is initiated in the Eucharist, the instantaneous change of the complete substances of the bread and wine into the complete substances of Christ's body and blood. Q. 76 is dedicated to the explanation of the precise manner of presence which this conversion entails; thus, here, for example, Thomas argues that the whole Christ--divinity, soul, and body (including the accidental determinations of his bodily substance)--is present, though, he adds, these diverse 'parts' of Christ are present in different ways (see below in the text on how the presence of those 'parts' of Christ which are the direct term of this conversion differs from that enjoyed by the other 'parts', which are in the sacrament only concomitantly). But, the account of substantial conversion and presence in these two questions directs our attention to the continued existence of the accidents of the bread and wine after the consecration. Thus, in q. 77, Thomas resumes in depth the discussion, begun in III,



75, 5, of subsistent accidents, stressing in this question both the work of God in maintaining these accidents and endowing them with the capacity to do all that the bread and wine formerly did, and, the increased dependence of the other accidents after the consecration on the dimensive quantity of the bread and wine. Finally, Thomas concludes the first half of his treatise by examining in q. 78 the forms by which the conversion is effected.

Even the second half of the treatise, which discusses a variety of questions having to do with the proper celebration and use of this sacrament, reflects Thomas' preoccupation with real presence. Thus, although it is not absolutely certain that Thomas has integrated perfectly his teaching on real presence with the requirements of his theology of grace--the possibility that he has failed to do so will be studied in the third chapter--his discussions of the eucharistic effects and the ways of 'eating' this sacrament in qq. 79 and 80, respectively, are based on, and are more or less consistent with, the conclusions of the first part of the treatise. Similarly, the analysis of the first eucharist in q. 81 reveals the influence of the account of real presence articulated earlier--see, e.g., III, 81, 1 ad 2, which concludes, on the basis of the substantial presence of Christ in this sacrament, that Christ received his own body and blood at that meal--while the earlier discussion causes Thomas in q. 82, on the minister of the sacrament, to emphasize that the role of the minister in achieving the conversion is limited strictly to acting 'in the person of Christ.' Finally, although in less obvious ways, as its general tone manifests, even the final question of the treatise, q. 83, which examines the ritual of the sacrament in the Church at the time of St. Thomas, also is based on this earlier teaching on real presence.

<sup>20</sup> In addition to the texts mentioned later in this chapter which affirm that the belief in real presence is grounded on the authority of God, see III, 75, 1c; here Thomas rejects as heretical the affirmation of a merely symbolic presence (in signo) of Christ in the sacrament because this position is contrary to the words of Christ (utpote verbis Christi contrarium), which suggest his 'real' presence in the Eucharist after the consecration. The words of Christ also determined the eucharistic understanding of St. Thomas in other ways. One of the most significant ways in which the biblical accounts have shaped his teaching is seen in his description of the 'fate' of the substances of the bread and wine after the consecration. As will be discussed in detail in the text below, Thomas considered it necessary for these substances to be changed into Christ's body and blood, for this is the only way in which Christ can begin to exist in the sacrament; hence, for Thomas, these substances do not remain

after the consecration for they have been changed into those of Christ's body and blood. Yet, although this substantial conversion was seen by St. Thomas to be required in order to preserve the real presence of Christ, for the present writer, at least, it is clear that Aquinas would not have seen fit to 'dismiss' these substances in this fashion after the consecration unless he had first been convinced that the absence of the original substances was itself demanded by the biblical faith in real presence: that is, Thomas would have amended his account of real presence and conversion if the pertinent biblical texts had testified to the continued existence of the original substances. Support for this interpretation is found in the same article (III, 75, 2c) in which Thomas asserts the necessity of substantial conversion to explain real presence. Here, among the three additional arguments advanced by Aquinas against the original substances remaining, he states that the opposing position would contradict the sacramental form, which is taken from Scripture: the words, 'This (hoc) is my body,' would not be true if the substance of the bread was still present, for the substance of the bread (the 'this' in the form in this unacceptable interpretation) is surely not the body of Christ; this other interpretation, Thomas adds, would only be viable only if the form had read 'Here (hic) is my body.' Hence, Thomas has clearly established his teaching in this particular regard on the testimony of Scripture.

J. McCue, "The Doctrine of Transubstantiation from Berengar through Trent: The Point at Issue," has offered a rather different description of the background to the medieval denial of the continued existence of these substances. Following the analysis of the young Luther (p. 385), the 'point at issue' for McCue is the abuse of the authority of the Church in doctrinal matters. In McCue's eyes, in terms of the Eucharist, the Church has misused its powers by defining as a dogma of belief a particular philosophical account (i.e., transubstantiation) of a profound mystery of faith (real presence) while simultaneously rejecting as heretical other, perhaps more valid, accounts (i.e., consubstantiation) of this same mystery. According to McCue, little value can be ascribed to the idea of transubstantiation as articulated by Aquinas and others in the medieval church: as Luther saw so clearly, the teaching on transubstantiation, as distinguished from the truth of real presence, "has no discernible origin and no appreciable end." Rather, only the decision of the Church to adopt transubstantiation as its official explanation of the manner in which real presence is initiated has prevented the abandonment long ago of this weak attempt at speculation. But, the sanction

of the Church for this teaching means that no one who is unable, on intellectual grounds, to accept this account can remain within the confines of the visible Church (unless, of course, he is willing to abandon his trust in Scripture as the sole determinant of faith by professing his acceptance of the right of the Church to introduce novelties into the faith). Thus, the disastrous consequence of the ill-advised imposition of this teaching on its members is the introduction of division into the (true) Church of Christ: as McCue states, although "the dogma of transubstantiation has no purpose and no support other than the authority of the Church," by the Church's affirmation of it, however, "anyone who would deny it is anathema." (p. 407) In support of his analysis, McCue points explicitly to Duns Scotus, who suppressed his own conviction about the deficiencies of transubstantiation in deference to Lateran IV's doctrinal affirmation of this teaching. [Although a detailed discussion would take us too far afield, it should be noted that an ancillary feature of McCue's thesis is that Lateran IV did not in fact make transubstantiation an official teaching of the Church; this had to await the action of Trent. Thus, despite the earlier council's statement that the bread is 'transubstantiated' (p. 393) in expressing its belief in real presence, for McCue, the affirmation by Scotus (and, later, by Trent) of transubstantiation on account of this council rested on a misunderstanding of its teaching (pp. 403, 405, 407, 430).] Having established the relative inanity of transubstantiation and exposed the abuse of Church authority which eventually caused this dubious doctrine to be foisted on Catholicism, McCue concludes his article by issuing a challenge to Catholic theologians to transcend the errors of their tradition. In the light of this penetrating analysis of history, can it yet be, McCue asks, that Roman Catholicism will still consider itself bound by this teaching and by the misguided actions of theologians and councils to maintain it? Or, "is the Roman Catholic self-understanding and its understanding of the nature and function of dogma such that it can reopen this question in a more basic way than thus far it has done?" (p. 430)

Despite McCue's obvious confidence in his thesis, serious objections can be raised against important aspects of his article. In the first place, the article clearly fails to fulfill the promise of its title: McCue hardly demonstrates that the affirmation of transubstantiation 'from Berengar through Trent' was dependent on the dogmatic definitions of the Church, whether misinterpreted or not. Rather, in support of his contention that transubstantiation was generally perceived as an unsound notion by theologians, McCue can point only to the example of Scotus (and his

school). Indeed, for most theologians earlier than Scotus (including Aquinas)--to say nothing of the numerous Catholic theologians after Scotus and before Trent--the teaching of transubstantiation was accepted on its own terms as the most appropriate and consistent way of explaining the real presence of Christ in the sacrament. But, secondly, even with regard to his treatment of Scotus, the quality of McCue's analysis is questionable. McCue is interested in Scotus only insofar as Scotus can support the critique (derived from Luther) of the Church advanced in this article. But, the fact that Scotus affirmed this teaching only on the basis of the authority of the Church naturally raises the question--or, at least this question would naturally arise for a scholar not interested primarily in promoting his polemical interests (incidentally, McCue has not identified his denominational affiliation; hence, it is not clear whether he is writing as a Lutheran or merely as a disaffected Catholic who has seen the light)--why this authority was so important for Scotus. Nevertheless, though he depends on Scotus to prove his case against the Catholic Church, we find in this lengthy article no reflection at all about the background to, or the theological presuppositions of, Scotus' doctrine of the Church and his resolution of theological problems by appeal to the Church, or, moreover, whether Scotus here manifests the common attitude of medieval theology to the Church. The contrast between McCue's treatment of this feature of Scotus' theology and the analysis of this question offered by D. Burr, "Scotus and Transubstantiation," is most illuminating in this regard. Burr, too, is aware that Scotus seems to have affirmed transubstantiation primarily on the basis of the authority of the Church (p. 351). But, Burr is not content to see in this a typical example of the degeneration which vitiated medieval thought or a proof of a general medieval subordination of theological truth and principle to the ungodly concerns of the Catholic hierarchy. Instead, Scotus' affirmation of transubstantiation provides Burr with the occasion for a reasoned consideration of the presuppositions of Scotus' deference to the Church. Hence, although he finally concludes that Scotus himself has not provided enough information to allow us to determine with certainty why Scotus thought the Church at the Lateran Council was led to embrace precisely transubstantiation (and not a different account) (p. 354), Burr at least makes Scotus' attitude to the authority of the Church as the ultimate arbiter of dogma more comprehensible by examining, e.g., how his conviction of divine freedom caused Scotus to stress revelation over so-called natural theology (p. 352), and, most importantly, the way in which Scotus' analysis of Church councils led

him to conclude that the same Spirit responsible for the biblical revelation was still active in the world, guiding the Church in its doctrinal deliberation (p. 353).

But, for our purposes, the most serious defect in McCue's presentation involves his treatment of Aquinas. In general, of course, McCue is content simply to rehash the traditional Lutheran criticisms of Aquinas on transubstantiation. Hence, though the utter inaccuracy of Luther's historical judgment forces him to admit that a good number of theologians before St. Thomas had indeed explicitly advanced some form of this doctrine, McCue nevertheless adds at one point that Luther was in fact correct to blame the use of this notion in the explanation of the Eucharist on the undue influence of Aquinas, perverted by his reading of Aristotle, on the understanding of the Church: since Aquinas so clearly wished to maintain this teaching and to deny the validity of other views (indeed, Aquinas' single-minded devotion to transubstantiation even caused him to castigate these views as heretical), "Luther's charge that Aristotle and Aquinas were responsible for the introduction of transubstantiation was not without an element of truth." (p. 395, n. 13) More serious than this touching display of confidence in the infallibility of the master, however, is the fact that McCue simply does not do justice to the reasons advanced by Thomas himself for denying the continued existence of the original substances and, especially, for characterizing the opposing position as 'heretical'. For some reason, McCue has based his presentation of Aquinas' teaching about the substance of the bread after the consecration not on the passage from the Summa discussed in the first paragraph of the present note, but on the relevant text from his much earlier work, the Commentary on the Sentences (IV, dist. xi, a. 1, solution 1) (p. 401). Now, it is difficult to discern what support McCue thinks this text offers to his thesis. As a careful reading discloses, Thomas proposes in this passage three kinds of arguments for denying the persistence of the original substances after the consecration. The 'survival' of the substances of the bread and wine cannot be affirmed, in the first place, because such an occurrence would be 'inappropriate' (incompetens) since, for example, the possibility would then arise that the veneration properly accorded Christ in the Eucharist would degenerate into idolatry, that is, into the worship of the original substances. Secondly, this other opinion is 'impossible' (impossibilis) in the context of the Catholic belief in Christ's real presence for it is only by a substantial conversion (as was seen above) that Christ actually can begin to exist in the sacrament. Finally--and it is this argument which is crucial for our evaluation of the value of McCue's treatment

of St. Thomas--Thomas says that this other position cannot be affirmed by the Church because it is 'heretical' (*haeretica*) inasmuch as the idea that the substances of the bread and wine remain in the sacrament would seem to contradict the truth of Scripture (i.e., as in ST, III, 75, 2c, Thomas argues that the 'hoc' points to the removal of the substance of the bread) (patet ex hoc quod contradicit veritati Scripturae; non enim esset verum dicere: 'Hoc est corpus meum,' sed: 'Hic est corpus'.) Far from supporting his thesis, then, this passage quoted by McCue actually suggests the very opposite of what he hopes to show. In this passage from the Comm. on the Sentences, Thomas clearly has based his opposition to 'consubstantiation' as heretical wholly on its incompatibility to Scripture (which is surely not antithetical to Lutheran interests); to put it bluntly, Thomas does not here argue that consubstantiation is heretical because it is, e.g., offensive to the Pope or to Lateran IV, or even because the notion is philosophically unsound. Of course, when one considers that the whole point of McCue's article is to decry the continued Catholic insistence on transubstantiation and especially to establish that this insistence at bottom derives from an illegitimate intrusion of the Church into the realm of the 'truths of faith,' it is not really surprising that McCue has chosen not to pursue the implications (both for his own thesis and for the Catholic understanding of the formulation of dogma) of the evidence of the text that the greatest theologian of the middle ages opposed the heresy of 'consubstantiation' precisely because of the words (not of tradition but) of Scripture. Instead, McCue simply foregoes any comment on this particular statement of Aquinas: just as the Scotist reliance on church authority failed to occasion an investigation of the presuppositions of this attitude, so too McCue seems oblivious to the ramifications of this reliance on Scripture as the basic rule of faith for our estimation of the faith and theology of St. Thomas.

Apart from the general weakness of his thesis and the superficiality of his treatment of Aquinas and Scotus, the basic flaw of McCue's article is that it fails to perceive that the word 'substance' as used by theologians of the real presence at various times in church history is a rather confusing term, capable of a wide variety of meanings in an eucharistic setting: McCue simply assumes that substantial or real presence denotes in fact a "physical presence" (p. 385) of Christ in the sacrament. Here, again, McCue seems to be following the lead of Luther. Thus, after chastizing modern Catholic thinkers who reject as "too materialistic" the Berengarian oath of 1059 (to be discussed in the text below), McCue points out that Luther--who

according to McCue held "a traditional real presence doctrine" (for Luther's understanding of 'substance' see the discussion on pp.414ff.)--approved of the contents of this oath: as Luther wrote in his Confession Concerning Christ's Supper (AE, 37, 300f.),

Therefore, the fanatics (=Zwinglians) are wrong, as well as the gloss in Canon Law, if they criticize Pope Nicholas for having forced Berengar to confess that the true body of Christ is crushed and ground with the teeth. Would to God that all popes had acted in so Christian a fashion in all other matters as this pope did with Berengar in forcing this confession. (quoted on p. 413)

As will shortly become apparent in the text below, such a 'traditional real presence doctrine' as is implicit in the Berengarian oath can hardly be ascribed to Thomas Aquinas, who accordingly also seems to have held a notion of substance different than that advanced by Luther and McCue. A valuable corrective to McCue's naive confidence about the universal agreement among eucharistic theologians about the meaning of 'substance' can be found, as one would expect, in Jaroslav Pelikan, The Growth of Medieval Theology, p. 202, where in the context of his discussion of the dispute between Radbertus and Ratramnus, Pelikan authentically acknowledges the diverse meanings which 'substance' has had in eucharistic theology. C. Stinson, in his doctoral dissertation, "Substantia Corporis," makes the same point at greater length.

<sup>21</sup>This text is cited in III, 73, 3 ob 3.

<sup>22</sup>See, e.g., III, 73, 2 sed contra.

<sup>23</sup>In addition to the passage discussed in the text, another biblical passage important for the establishment of the general conviction of the absence of the risen Christ from the sphere of men until the end of time was II Corinthians 5:16, 'Even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, henceforth we know him no more.' For a discussion of the use of this text made by Berengar in his own teaching, see J. Pelikan, op cit., p. 192.

<sup>24</sup>Thomas makes the point that sacramental presence serves to ameliorate the hardship imposed on the faithful by the withdrawal of Christ's natural presence in a number of passages. Thus, e.g., in III, 75, 1c, among the reasons offered by St. Thomas for concluding that real presence is 'fitting' is that this presence is in accordance with the

charity of Christ. Now, since the law of friendship is that 'friends should live together,' Christ has promised those whom he loves his bodily presence in heaven as a reward. But, even in the Church's pilgrimage (peregrinatio) in the present age, Christ has not left men without his presence, for he joins the beloved to himself by this sacrament in which he is really present. Hence it is, as Thomas concludes, that his real presence in the Eucharist is a sign (signum) of Christ's great love for men (which love will be consummated in the next life). See also III, 73, 5c, where in arguing for the 'wisdom' of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, Thomas notes that Christ, being about to withdraw his natural appearance from the disciples (Christus in propria specie a discipulis discessurus erat), wisely saw fit to leave himself for them in sacramental form (in sacramentali specie seipsum eis reliquit). The implications of those and similar texts for our understanding of the eschatological connotations of Eucharistic reception according to St. Thomas will be explored in detail in the third chapter.

<sup>25</sup> The purpose of this discussion of earlier, less acceptable attempts to resolve the difficulties involved in the Eucharist has been to establish a framework for the adequate analysis of Thomas' own treatment of substantial conversion and presence; in other words, seeking her to facilitate the later presentation of Aquinas' own thought, it is not the intention of the present paragraph to examine these other teachings on their own terms or to determine the merits of these different approaches. For more complete, historical accounts of the Eucharist before St. Thomas, see J. McGivern, Concomitance and Communion, and, C. Stinson, op. cit., both writers examine the Eucharistic theologies of most of the important thinkers in the West in the course of the development of their respective topics. More concise descriptions of earlier analyses of the Eucharist can be found in J. Powers, Eucharistic Theology, pp. 11-31, and, K. McDonnell, John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, pp. 40-59. With customary insight, Jaroslav Pelikan, op. cit., has discussed various stages in the Eucharistic debate in the Latin church: see, e.g. pp. 74-80 on Radbertus and Ratramnus; and pp. 184-204 on Berengar and the eleventh-century controversy.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas cites part of the Berengarian oath in III, 77, 7 ob 3, in the context of his own discussion of whether it is the sacramental species or the body of Christ itself which is broken in the sacrament: corde et ore profiteor panem et vinum quae in altari ponuntur, post consecrationem verum corpus et sanguinem Christi esse, et in veritate manibus sacerdotum tractari, frangi et fidelium dentibus atteri. In ad 3, in accordance with his rejection of a 'metabolic'



understanding of real presence, Thomas denies that Christ's body as it is in the Eucharist is affected in any way by the physical treatment of the consecrated host; rather, the breaking and chewing mentioned in this oath have to do with the sacramental species. It would seem therefore, that rather than grant to the text its proper and more obvious meaning, Thomas has here preferred to read his own 'spiritual' conception of Christ's existence in the sacrament into this infamous and crude description of real presence.

K. Purday, "Berengar and the Use of the Word 'Substantia'", has examined the reasons for Berengar's reluctance to accept a 'substantial' presence of Christ in the Eucharist. As Purday points out, although the 1059 oath quoted above does not employ the word 'substance,' a later oath imposed on Berengar by the Church (in 1079) used the word 'substantialiter' in a central passage to describe the change (p. 101). Purday wants to determine why Berengar was hesitant to accept even this later oath, which seemingly affirmed real presence in a much less offensive manner than the oath of 1059. Purday's examination of the use of the word 'substance' at this time reveals that there was no consensus about its exact connotation in the Eucharist even among 'orthodox' writers (p. 104). Indeed, some evidence exists that for a number of contemporary writers 'substance' tended to refer to the entire physical structure of a thing (*ibid.*; see also pp. 108, 109). More importantly, Purday's review of Berengar's own use of 'substance; shows that this was the dominant sense in which Berengar understood the term (p. 106). According to Purday, this helps to explain why Berengar rejected any suggestion of a change of 'substances' in the Eucharist, for such a change, noted Berengar, would both contradict the evidence of the senses, and, entail a physical and passible presence of Christ in the Eucharist (p. 107). In the light of this examination, Purday concludes that Berengar thus would conceive the 1079 oath, employing the word 'substantialiter', as describing, albeit more urbanely, the same unacceptable form of presence as did the oath of 1059 and adds that since "his definition of substantia was virtually the opposite of the later connotation embodied in the doctrine of transubstantiation" (p. 110), Berengar was perhaps justified in opposing the current teaching on real presence.

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., III, 76, 1 ob 3.

<sup>28</sup> See III, 76, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Berengar's acceptance of a more 'figurative' presence of Christ in the sacrament follows logically his rejection of a corporeal eucharistic presence. J. McCue, art. cit., who is not so certain that Berengar actually

affirmed a merely symbolic presence (although he does not offer any reasons for his doubt), concedes that most have ascribed such a view to Berengar: "whether or not he was a Zwinglian avant la lettre is here beside the point; so he was understood in his day and immediately thereafter" (p. 386). Actually, as in so many other places in his article, McCue appears to be a bit confused. If he means by this statement that people at the time of Zwingli or scholars since the Reformation have viewed Berengar as a "Zwinglian avant la lettre", McCue is correct. But, if McCue means that the opponents of Berengar themselves perceived the (anticipatory) resemblance of his thought to the eucharistic theology of Zwingli and thus sought to defame him by branding him a 'Zwinglian,' this would be (to adopt for the moment the rather strident tone of McCue's article) to ascribe to these thinkers a prescience and insight which were otherwise lacking in medieval thought.

<sup>30</sup>For a discussion of the complex thought of Ratramnus in this regard, in addition to J. Pelikan, op. cit., p. 77, see K. McDonnell, op. cit., pp. 51-2, where McDonnell underscores the Platonic notion of participation presupposed by Ratramnus' 'figurative' approach.

<sup>31</sup>The contrast between presences in signo and secundum veritatem is found in III, 75, 1c.

<sup>32</sup>III, 75, 2c. In this article, Thomas is considering whether the substances of the bread and wine survive the consecration. In addition to the argument discussed in the text, Thomas advances three other reasons for denying that the original substances remain. The first has already been examined in note 20 of the present chapter. The second is that if another substance undeserving of latria were present, it would interfere with the veneration which must be given to the Eucharist and occasion idolatry; the third is that it would not agree with the rite of the Church which forbids reception of Christ's body after the eating of bodily food but allows one to receive one consecrated host after another. As should be evident, the four arguments proposed by Thomas here are not of equal weight. For example, as Duns Scotus saw, the argument from the requirements of latria seems especially weak, for the accidents of the bread and wine, which do survive the consecration, are as underserving of worship as their substances (and hence as potentially troublesome). See D. Burr, art. cit., p. 350.

<sup>33</sup>As F. C. Copleston, Aquinas, p. 35, notes, for Aristotle and Aquinas, the metaphysician is concerned "with the categorical structure of empirical reality," the intelligible structure of things regarded in themselves and in their fundamental relationships.

<sup>34</sup>III, 77, 1 ad 2.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>See, e.g., III, 75, 2 ad 3, where in the context of explaining why the continued existence of the original substances is unnecessary for sacramental signification, Thomas argues that the accidents of the bread and wine by themselves are sufficient to signify the spiritual truths associated with the Eucharist, for 'it is actually through the accidents that the nature of any substance is discerned' (per accidentia cognoscitur ratio substantiae); and, III, 77, 1 ob 1, which argues against subsistent accidents on the grounds that since 'accidents are signs which reveal the nature of the subject in which they inhere' (cum accidentia sint signa naturae subjecti), if these accidents in fact had no subject, there would then be deception in this 'sacrament of truth,' for the accidents would be 'revealing' something false (and, indeed, non-existent).

<sup>37</sup>As will become evident later in this chapter, in Thomas' use of the term 'substance' in his Eucharistic thought, certain nuances of meaning may be distinguished. First, 'substance' denotes that which in itself is non-spatial and non-sensible. But, firstly, inasmuch as the initial accidental modification of substance is its dimensive quantity (see III, 77, 2c), to whose definition belongs the notion of 'having position,' substance thus denotes by extension an entity which exists in place. Moreover, though itself not the object of any sense, by virtue of its accidental modifications which are visible to the senses, 'substance' also describes that which is perceived by the senses. For this idea of 'substance' as within the purview of the senses, see E. Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 29, where Gilson calls substance the 'being which comes to us in sense experience,' and also p. 31. See also III, 77, 7c, where Thomas attacks the notion that the fractio of the host really occurs but that there is no substance after the consecration involved in this breaking (vera fractio sine substantia existente): this opinion is unacceptable, says St. Thomas, for it contradicts the senses (hoc . . . sensui contradicit) which perceive something extended which at first is one and divided into many.

The second meaning of 'substance' is that which in this entity perceived through sense is definable and hence knowable by the intellect. In this sense, 'substance' seems to serve as a synonym for 'essence' which more usually denotes that which may be defined in substantial entities. For example, see III, 75, 5 ad 2, where thomas says substance is the proper object of the intellect (intellectus . . .

cuius est proprium obiectum substantia). For other instances in which 'substance' acts as the equivalent of 'essence,' see R. Gehring, "The Knowledge of Material Essences According to St. Thomas Aquinas," pp. 164ff. See also M. Grabmann, Thomas Aquinas: His Personality and Thought, p. 78, where Grabmann has asserted that Aquinas, like Aristotle, distinguished "a first substance, the real concrete individual being (Socrates), and a second substance, the essence of the individual being (humanity);" and, E. Gilson, op.cit., p. 30, who allows that Thomas sometimes used 'substance' instead of 'essence' because of the closeness of meaning of the two terms.

<sup>38</sup>M. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 129; F. C. Copleston, op. cit., pp. 36, 91.

<sup>39</sup>See Thomas Aquinas, The Principles of Nature, 1,3 (in Selected Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas): "what makes something exist substantially is called substantial form; what makes something exist accidentally is called accidental form."

<sup>40</sup>See M. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 130: "The substantial form, the essential form, constitutes the substance in its essential being, gives primary and specific being to it. The accidental form is, as it were, superadded to a substance already constituted in its being, and gives it secondary being."

<sup>41</sup>The Principles of Nature, 1,2.

<sup>42</sup>ST, 77, 2c; see also E. Gilson, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>43</sup>Needless to say, the description of the uniqueness of the Eucharistic change and of the general brilliance of the Thomistic account found on the following pages makes no claim to be a complete examination of the 'metaphysical' aspects of Thomas' teaching on the Eucharist; for one thing, such a thorough examination would be here impossible, for it is surely the complexity and speculative brilliance of the relevant questions in this treatise, III, 75-77, which have occasioned the opinion of one of the greatest modern authorities on Aquinas, J. Weisheipl, Friar Thomas D' Aquinas: His Life, Thought, and Work, p. 315, that the treatise on the Eucharist in the Summa "is among the most sublime and the most perfect treatises produced in the Middle Ages." Rather, the account of substantial conversion and presence which follows is oriented wholly to the principal concern of this thesis, the roles of faith in the Eucharist. Hence, in the

first place, the following description of the work of God in this sacrament, subsistent accidents, Christ's presence per modum substantiae, and, concomitance, for example, is designed to facilitate the discussion with which the present chapter concludes, of the necessity of faith for the personal realization of real presence. Similarly, the emphasis of the pertinent aspects of Thomas' theory of real presence will be of value for the analysis, in the next chapter, of faith's function in the reception of the eucharistic benefits--for example, the proper understanding of substantial presence will further the attempt to define adequately 'spiritual eating' by disclosing the inappropriateness of perceiving the reception of Christ as primarily a physical act.

<sup>44</sup>F. C. Copleston, op. cit., p. 89. See also III, 75, 8c: 'in natural change, the matter of the first thing takes on the form of the second one, having laid aside the first form.'

<sup>45</sup>III, 75, 4c. In this text, Thomas immediately adds that this change is thus not formal but 'substantialis'. For similar affirmations of the conversion of complete substances involved in the Eucharist, see, e.g., III, 75, 8c; 77, 5c.

<sup>46</sup>See, e.g., III, 75, 4 ad 3, where Thomas states explicitly that the matter of the original substances, as well as their forms, is here converted.

<sup>47</sup>Although the idea represented by the term pervades the entire treatise on the Eucharist, Thomas uses the actual word 'transubstantiatio' only in a very few articles: see, e.g. III, 75, 4c; III, 75, 8c; III, 78, 1c; and, III, 78, 5 ob 1. Much more commonly, Thomas employs the noun conversio and the verb converto to describe the eucharistic change.

<sup>48</sup>See III, 75, 4 ob 1.

<sup>49</sup>III, 75, 4 ad 1, ad 2.

<sup>50</sup>See, e.g., III, 75, 8c.

<sup>51</sup>It is not the concern of this thesis to determine the notion of subsistent accidents is an aberration in the thought of Aquinas. Needless to say, since the time of Aquinas the question of subsistent accidents has been the focus of a good deal of debate about the merits of Aquinas' Eucharistic doctrine. For a modern interpretation which

grants the validity of this concept, see R. Fontaine, Subsistent Accident in the Philosophy of Saint Thomas and in His Predecessors, which views subsistent accidents as a legitimate development in his philosophy consistent with the basic features of Thomas' previous analysis of substance and accidents (p. 118). In addition to the fact that Fontaine locates Thomas' discussion in its historical context by surveying, for example, the teaching of earlier philosophers on subsistent accidents, Fontaine's book is valuable for it correctly describes the arguments adduced by Thomas in support of the notion, which stress the necessity of God's work in the maintenance of these accidents (e.g., p. 114), and, the importance ascribed by Thomas to the 'dimensive quantity' for the continued existence of the other accidents (pp. 103ff.). For a modern critique of the notion of subsistent accidents as an ad hoc response to the difficulty posed by the continued appearances of the bread and wine, see D. J. B. Hawkins, "Reflections on Transubstantiation;" Hawkins thinks that Thomas must have been "pretty desperate" (p. 315) to suggest this idea.

<sup>52</sup>In his discussion of the Eucharist, in the context of explaining why the accidents of the bread and wine do not come to inhere in a new subject after the consecration, Thomas observes that accidents are never passed from one subject to another (III, 77, 1c). Specifically in terms of the Eucharist, at least two objections to the idea that Christ's body serves as the new subject of the accidents of the bread can be made. First, it is impossible to conceive how accidents of one kind of thing may actually modify a completely different kind of thing. Moreover, the body of Christ after the resurrection is impassible and thus cannot undergo further change (ibid.).

<sup>53</sup>Thomas defends the conclusion that the original accidents remain expressly on the basis of the evidence of the senses in a number of places: see, e.g., III, 75, 5c, where Thomas says that it is obvious to the senses that, after the consecration, all the accidents of the bread and wine remain (sensu apparet, facta consecratione, omnia accidentia panis and vini remanere); III, 75, 5 ad 2, where Thomas points out that as the senses tell us, accidents, which are naturally discerned by sense, do remain; and, III, 77, 1c, where Thomas begins his detailed discussion of the problem of subsistent accidents by noting that our senses perceive that the accidents survive the consecration (accidentia panis et vini, quae sensu deprehenduntur in hoc sacramento remanere post consecrationem. . .).

<sup>54</sup>In the treatise on the Eucharist, Thomas first makes the point that the remaining accidents of the bread

and wine can now do all that the bread and wine did when their substances were present in III, 75, 6 ad 3. Here, Thomas begins by observing that certain operations of the bread and wine were derived from their accidents; in this regard, Thomas notes the ability to impress the senses (immutare sensum). Hence, since these accidents remain, this activity thus still derives from the accidents themselves. But, he continues, other operations of the bread arose not from the accidents, but from the matter--for example, in the change of the bread into something else--or, from the substantial form--for example, the exercise of the specific causality of the bread. That these operations continue after the consecration is possible, Thomas concludes, because these powers have now been miraculously conferred on the accidents themselves. In the various articles of q. 77, Thomas turns in detail to the discussion of how the subsistent accidents are responsible for the continued ability of the species to pursue the full range of the natural activities of bread and wine.

<sup>55</sup> As was mentioned in note 51 above, in q. 77 Thomas assigns great value to the 'dimensive quantity' (quantitas dimensiva) of the bread in his teaching on subsistent accident. For him, this accident, to whose definition belongs the idea of 'quantity having position' (III, 77, 2c), is the primary and principal accidental modification of substance (III, 76 8 ob.1). As such, it serves as the medium through which the other accidents are related to prime matter. Hence, by virtue of this role as the 'foundation' of the other accidents (III, 76, 8c), in III, 77, 2c, Thomas concludes that after the consecration, this accident serves as the subject of the other accidents (see also III, 77, 4c). In addition, in this same text, Thomas offers two further reasons for saying that the dimensive quantity becomes the subject of the other accidents: because the other accidents seem to affect this accident, inasmuch as what appears to the senses is something extended which is coloured, etc.; and, because this accident even before the conversion of substances seems to be a source of the individuation of the other accidents, which exist in this thing and not in another on account of this accident which prevents them from being in many subjects (for this latter reason, see also ad 2). The effect of this stress on the importance of the dimensive quantity is to mitigate somewhat the harshness of Thomas' teaching on subsistent accidents: since this accident now assumes a 'quasi-substantial' role in relation to the other accidents, the difficulty involved in the idea of accidents surviving the removal of their substance is more or less reduced to the question of the legitimacy of the elevation of this accident to such status. On this, see D. J. B. Hawkins, art. cit., p. 315.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas ascribes subsistent accidents to divine providence in III, 75, 5c. In this text, Thomas proposes three arguments to demonstrate the 'reasonableness' of this arrangement: first, since men do not normally eat human flesh--indeed, the thought revolts them--it is good that Christ's body and blood can hereby be received under the form of food in more common use; second, this state of affairs precludes the possibility that the eating of Christ in the Eucharist will become an object of contempt for unbelievers; and, third, since Christ thus is present invisibly, communion thus can work to the increase of the merit of faith (ad meritum fidei). On the basis of the first reason, G. Egner, "Some Thoughts on the Eucharistic Presence," p. 406, has concluded to the 'cannibalistic' nature of eucharistic eating in St. Thomas. (Although Egner, in "More Thoughts on the Eucharistic Presence," p. 177, allows that his charge may be somewhat harsh, he does not really retract this criticism of Aquinas.) As will be seen in the next chapter, despite the incautious nature of Thomas' affirmation here, in no way is eucharistic eating for him a 'cannibalistic' act. For this thesis, of course, it is the third reason here offered by St. Thomas which is the most interesting; as was indicated in the introduction, the meritorious nature of faith in the reception of the Eucharist will be considered at the end of the third chapter.

<sup>57</sup> III, 75, 5 ob 1.

<sup>58</sup> III, 75, 5 ad 1; III, 77, 1c.

<sup>59</sup> For mention of the Eucharist as the work of God, see, e.g., III, 75, 3 sed contra, where the fact that this sacrament is a work of divine power precludes the possibility that the substance of the bread is annihilated; III, 75, 7c and sed contra, where Thomas says that since the Eucharistic conversion is wrought by 'the infinite power of God,' the change must be instantaneous; and, III, 77, 3 ad 2, where Thomas concludes that it is the divine power which endows the species with the power to act without their substantial form. For Thomas' description of the 'miraculous' nature of the Eucharist, in addition to III, 75, 6 ad 3 discussed in note 54 of this chapter, see III, 78, 1c: in this sacrament, the consecration of the matter consists in quadam miraculosa conversione substantiae, quae a solo Deo perfici potest. Finally, Thomas has ascribed the Eucharistic change to the Holy Spirit in III, 75, 1 ad 1 and ad 4; III, 78, 4 ob 1 and ad 1 (quoting Damascene, who says the change is achieved by the Holy Spirit); III, 82, 5 ad 2; and, III, 82, 5 sed contra (citing Radbertus on the work of the Spirit).



<sup>60</sup>III, 75, 4c.

<sup>61</sup>See, in addition, III, 75, 4 ad 3. The third objection had denied the possibility of the conversion of complete substances precisely on the grounds that it is impossible for the matter of one thing, the source of individual distinction, to become the matter of another. In reply, Thomas concedes the accuracy of this observation with regard to the scope of activity of a created agent; but, he continues, an infinite agent is in fact able to transform not only the form, but even the matter of things: 'Form cannot pass into form nor matter into matter by the power of a created agent. But the power of an infinite agent which bears on the whole being of a thing can bring about such a change. To the form of each thing and to the matter of each thing the nature 'being' is common; and the author of being is able to change that which is 'being' in the one into that which 'being' in the other, by taking away what kept this from being from that.'

<sup>62</sup>The affirmation that real presence is a presence per modum substantiae appears in numerous texts; see, e.g., III, 76, 1 ad 3; III, 76, 3c; 5c; and 7c. See also III, 65, 3c, where Thomas says Christ is present in the sacrament substantialiter, and, III, 76, 5c, secundum modum substantiae. For Thomas, of course, substantial presence is not less 'real' than a physical or local presence; see, e.g., III, 73, 4c and III, 75, 1c, where he states that the sacrament contains Christ realiter.

<sup>63</sup>III, 76, 4 ad 2 and ad 3.

<sup>64</sup>Striking evidence of the non-local character of the substantial presence of Christ in the host can be found in III, 81, passim, the discussion of the institution of the Eucharist; throughout, Thomas maintains the distinction between Christ as he was physically present as the first celebrant of the sacrament, and, Christ as he was present at the Supper in the consecrated host.

<sup>65</sup>III, 76, 1 ad 3.

<sup>66</sup>III, 76, 3c.

<sup>67</sup>III, 76, 1c.

<sup>68</sup>III, 76, 1 ad 1.

<sup>69</sup>J. McGivern, op. cit., pp. 188-9, points out that despite claims to the contrary, Thomas was not the first to employ the word 'concomitantia' in an eucharistic setting; in fact, Richard Fishacre at Oxford (before 1245) seems to have been the originator of the term. Indeed, McGivern notes at least five passages in different writers in which the term appears before Aquinas (see p. 212). According to McGivern (pp. 217ff.), Thomas' specific contribution to the idea of concomitance is the argument that the accidents of Christ's body and blood are also present by concomitance.

<sup>70</sup>See, e.g., III, 76, 4c.

<sup>71</sup>III, 76, 4 ad 1.

<sup>72</sup>See, e.g., III, 75, 1c: verum corpus Christi et sanguinem esse in hoc sacramento, non sensu deprehendi potest, sed sola fide, quae auctoritati divinae innititur.

<sup>73</sup>This brief survey of Thomas' 'theory of knowledge', which is designed to demonstrate why the truth of real presence transcends man's capacity for knowledge, is dependent on the descriptions found in F. C. Copleston, op. cit., pp. 178-184; M. Grabmann, op. cit., pp. 136-147; H. B. Veatch, Aristotle: A Contemporary Appreciation, pp. 76-89; and, G. C. Reilly, "St. Thomas and the Problem of Knowledge," passim. Naturally, it has been impossible to examine in detail the 'mechanics' of the acquisition of knowledge according to St. Thomas; rather, this summary is meant only to establish that for Thomas, the natural knowledge of 'substance' arises from the evidence provided by the senses. On this basis, then, the specific reasons why the substance of the species after the consecration is unknowable, reasons which are directly taken from Thomas' eucharistic teaching, will be more easily understood.

<sup>74</sup>H. B. Veatch, op. cit., pp. 76-7.

<sup>75</sup>F. C. Copleston, op. cit., pp. 179-80.

<sup>76</sup>As M. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 138, states, for St. Thomas, "the total content of higher knowledge is ultimately furnished through the medium of the senses."

<sup>77</sup>F. C. Copleston, op. cit., pp. 181-2; M. Grabmann, op. cit., pp. 139-40.

<sup>78</sup>Thomas states explicitly that substance is the proper object of the intellect in III, 75, 5 ad 2 (Intellectus . . . cuius est proprium objectum substantia, ut dicitur in De Anima) and III, 76, 7c (substantia . . . est visibilis . . . soli intellectui, 'cuius objectum est quod quid est,' ut dicitur in De Anima). This meaning of 'substance' as the equivalent of 'essence' has been mentioned in note 37 above.

<sup>79</sup>III, 75, 5 ad 2.

<sup>80</sup>In III, 75, 5 ad 2 and ad 3, Thomas makes the point that the respective spheres of interest of the senses, and, of the intellect, are different: whereas the senses are concerned with the accidents, the intellect is concerned with substance. In ad 3, Thomas mentions that faith, which is in the intellect, is not in opposition to what the senses tell us, for it is concerned with something (i.e., substance) to which the senses do not attain.

<sup>81</sup>See, e.g., III, 75, 5 ob 2: per accidentia iudicamus de substantia.

<sup>82</sup>III, 75, 5 ad 2: Intellectus . . . cuius est proprium objectum substantia . . . per fidem a deceptione praeservatur.

<sup>83</sup>III, 76, 7c.

<sup>84</sup>III, 75, 1c.

<sup>85</sup>See also III, 76, 7c: here, Thomas explains that the body of Christ as it is in the sacrament is 'visible' to different kinds of intellect in different ways. Hence, Thomas says, because the mode of being in which Christ is in the Eucharist is entirely supernatural, it is only for a supernatural intellect, namely, the divine, that Christ is visible directly (quia . . . modus essendi quo Christus est in hoc sacramento est penitus supernaturalis, a supernaturali intellectu, scilicet divino, secundum se visibilis est). In the same text, Thomas later notes that this same fact also means that for 'man-on-the-way' to heaven, this presence cannot be viewed by his intellect unless through faith, just as is the case for his knowledge of other supernatural realities (Ab intellectu . . . hominis viatoris non potest conspici nisi per fidem: sicut et caetera supernaturalia).

<sup>86</sup>II-II, 1, 8 ob 6 and ad 6.

<sup>87</sup>II-II, 1, 6c.

<sup>88</sup>See also III, 64, 3 sed contra, where it is stated that it is not as man but as God that Christ works to produce the sacramental effect.

<sup>89</sup>III, 75, 1c. Thomas here immediately quotes Cyril who has directed his comments to the formal basis of belief in real presence: commenting on the words 'This is my body,' Cyril states that this truth must not be doubted; instead, we should take Christ's words in faith, 'for he is truth itself, he does not lie.' Earlier (in the sed contra), Thomas had quoted Hilary, who seems to have emphasized more the material content of this faith: there is no room to doubt the truth of real presence, for this is what the Lord taught and faith accepts.

<sup>90</sup>II-II, 1, 1.

<sup>91</sup>As was seen in the preceeding paragraph, for Thomas the truth of real presence is subsumed under the article of faith describing the omnipotence of God. Thus, the material object of this act of faith in real presence would be directly concerned with God Himself. But, as suggested in the present paragraph, with regard to the sanctifying power of the sacrament, God only indirectly constitutes the material object of faith.

<sup>92</sup>See also II-II, 1, 1 ad 1: we assent to the objects of faith propter divinam veritatem.

<sup>93</sup>Thomas makes the point that the priest pronounces the words of consecration as if Christ himself were present in III, 78, 5c; in III, 78, 1c, he says that because this sacrament requires a change of substances, the minister has no other function than to pronounce the words of consecration. Thomas also stresses that the minister in the Eucharist works only 'in the person of Christ' at a number of points: see, e.g., III, 78, 1c and ad 4, and, III, 82, 5 ad 3, where he states that the priest consecrates ex persona Christi; and, III, 82, 5c, and, III, 83, 1 ad 3, where the priest is said to work in persona Christi.

<sup>94</sup>See III, 82, 1c.

<sup>95</sup>III, 82, 6c.

<sup>96</sup>Thomas repeats this distinction between the various activities of the priest in the mass in III, 82, 7 ad 3; according to Aquinas, in the mass, the priest prays in persona Ecclesiae, but consecrates in persona Christi, whose role he occupies through the power of his ordination. Earlier in the Summa, in III, 64, 1 ad 2, Thomas also points out that the prayers uttered in conferring the sacraments are brought before God by the minister on the part of the Church as a whole.

<sup>97</sup>See III, 64, 5 ad 1. As Thomas continues, in the case of the administration of penance, the personal morality of the priest is not directly pertinent, for the cleansing from sin "is something which Christ does of his own power working through them as through instruments of a certain kind. In III, 64, 3c, Thomas describes the minister of the sacraments as a 'separated instrument' of Christ in the sanctification of men.

<sup>98</sup>The phrase, sacramenta ecclesiae, appears, e.g., in II-II, 1, 1 ad 1.

<sup>99</sup>III, 64, 9.

<sup>100</sup>See, e.g., III, 64, 8.

<sup>101</sup>Thomas makes the observation that the personal intention of the priest to consecrate the sacraments for the purpose for which they were instituted reflects and 'personifies' the intention of the Church itself in a number of passages: see, e.g., III, 60, 7 ad 3, where Thomas says that if the priest deliberately distorts the words of consecration, he does not intend to do what the Church does (. . . non videtur intendere facere quod facit Ecclesia), and the sacrament does not take effect; see also III, 60, 8c and III, 64, 8 ad 2. In III, 64, 8 ad 1, Thomas mentions this intention in terms of the priest's relation to both Christ and the Church: by his intention (intentio), the priest subjects himself to the principal agent, in such a way that he intends to do what Christ and the Church does (ut scilicet intendat facere quod facit Christus et Ecclesia). Specifically with regards to the necessity of the priest's intention in the Eucharist, see, e.g., III, 74, 2 ad 2.

<sup>102</sup>III, 64, 9 ad 1.

<sup>103</sup>II-II, 1, 9 ad 3. In this text, Thomas explains that the creed is professed as if ex persona totius Ecclesiae, which is bound together by faith (quae per fidem unitur). He then explains that it is proper that the creed be formulated in terms congenial to a 'living faith' (fides formata), for this is the kind of faith enjoyed by the Church (fides . . . ecclesiae est fides formata), inasmuch as this perfect faith is found in all those who are truly members of Christ's church (talis . . . fides invenitur in omnibus illis qui sunt numero et merito de Ecclesia).

<sup>104</sup>For an adequate discussion of the 'faith of the Church' in relation to the sacraments in general, which more or less parallels the following analysis of the role of this faith in the celebration of the Eucharist, see C. O'Neill, "The Role of the Recipient and Sacramental Signification," pp. 274-5.

<sup>105</sup>In addition to this role of the faith of the Church in the sacraments, in the Summa Thomas also stresses the value of this faith in the actual reception of sacramental effects. For valid reception of any sacrament, faith is required. But, there are certain individuals who are themselves incapable of supplying this faith. Hence, Thomas says that the 'faith of the Church' overcomes the personal 'defects' of such recipients, allowing them to obtain the sacramental benefits. For further discussion of this aspect of the faith of the Church, see, in the treatise on Baptism, III, 68, 9 ad 2 and ad 3, and, III, 69, 6 ad 3, where Thomas affirms that the 'faith of the Church' enables infants and children to receive the fruits of Baptism; see also III, 68, 12c, where he applies this teaching to the mentally deficient. Thomas has also referred in the treatise on the Eucharist to this aspect of the activity of the Church which arises from its faith in Christ. For St. Thomas, the Eucharist occupies a central place in the spiritual life, providing men with certain gifts of Christ necessary for the attainment of heaven. Thus, Thomas argues that reception of this sacrament works for the general good of the individual. But, he adds, for those--such as infants--unable actually to receive the sacrament, this inability does not work to their spiritual detriment. This is the case because, apart from the physical reception of the sacrament, the gifts of the Eucharist may also be obtained 'spiritually', through a desire for the Eucharist, a desire which the Church can provide in the case of one personally incapable of formulating such an intention. Thus, as Thomas says

in the one passage in the treatise on the Eucharist in which the term 'fides Ecclesiae' in fact appears, III, 73, 3c, just as infants believe with the faith of the Church (ex fide Ecclesiae credunt), so too by its intention (ex intentione Ecclesiae), they desire the Eucharist (desiderant Eucharistiam) and hence receive its power (res sacramenti). In regard to the Church desiring the Eucharist on behalf of the infant, see also III, 79, 1 ad 1. In the next chapter, there will be occasion to examine the reception of the eucharistic effects by desire in the case of adults.

### CHAPTER THREE

<sup>1</sup>The account of the Eucharistic benefits which follows in the text does not claim to be an exhaustive examination of all the effects described by St. Thomas in this treatise. Rather, mention has here been made only of the principal benefits and those--e.g., the forgiveness of sin through the stimulation of love--which are especially relevant to the argument later in this chapter, which seeks to establish the resemblance of this sacrament to other crucial stages in the spiritual life. For a more detailed account of the benefits of this sacrament, in addition to III, 79, see J. Dittoe, "Sacramental Incorporation into the Mystical Body," pp. 502ff., which provides a generally accurate summary of Thomas' discussion in this regard.

<sup>2</sup>III, 79, 1c.

<sup>3</sup>Reference has already been made to Thomas' conviction that the sacraments can cause grace only by virtue of their relation to the Passion; see, for example, pp. 15f. in the first chapter. In addition to the present passage, Thomas has elsewhere advanced the relation of the Eucharist to the Passion as a specific cause of its beneficial effects; see, e.g., III, 78, 3c; 3 ads 3 and 6.

<sup>4</sup>Aquinas' understanding of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist in terms of substantial conversion naturally eliminates the possibility of explaining real presence on the basis of an analogy with the Incarnation: in the Incarnation, of course, the humanity of Christ is not transformed into the divinity, but instead 'co-exists' with it. The unsuitability of the Incarnation as a model upon which to base our understanding of the sacrament emerges in III, 75, 2 ob 1; here, in the context of a discussion of whether the original substances survive the consecration, Damascene is quoted to the effect that Christ makes the bread and wine to be his body and blood by joining his godhead to them; hence, this objection continues, since that to which something is joined really exists, the substances of the bread and wine must continue to exist. It is for this reason that there are very few references to the Incarnation in the treatise on the



Eucharist. For the most part, the Incarnation is invoked only in quotes from other writers; in addition to the present passage (III, 79, 1c), in which immediately after Thomas makes the statement about real presence as the cause of the Eucharistic benefits cited below in the text, he quotes Cyril in support, see, e.g., III, 74, 4c, where Gregory points to the Incarnation to explain the usage of unleavened bread in the sacrament in the Roman Church and leavened bread in others ('the Roman Church offers unleavened bread, because the Lord united human nature to himself without any mixture of the divine and human natures. But, certain churches offer leavened bread, because the Word of the Father clothed himself with our nature, as the leaven is mixed with the flour'); and, III, 75, 1 ad 1, where Augustine, drawing a parallel to the Incarnation in which 'flesh was enlivened by the Spirit,' is cited to establish the value of real presence.

<sup>5</sup>In III, 79, 1c, Thomas actually advances two additional reasons for concluding that grace is offered through the Eucharist: because the mode in which the sacrament is given, i.e., as food and drink, suggests that the Eucharist does for the spiritual life all that material food and drink do for bodily life; and, because the signification of the species as single objects fabricated from many implies that this is the sacrament through which the unity of the Church is established. As this brief review suggests, then, the final two considerations offered in the corpus point more to effects, both personal and communal, which presuppose and result from the gift of grace than to the actual causes of grace; hence, in our enumeration of the causes of grace in the Eucharist in the text, no reference has been made to these two other points. (Some support for our division of the four considerations of this corpus into the categories of 'causes of grace,' and, 'effects of the gift of grace,' is provided, in fact, by the following article, III, 79, 2c; here, in the context of explaining why the attaining of heaven is an effect of this sacrament, Thomas repeats the four considerations of the first article but himself divides them into two groupings--most significantly, he here entitles the first two considerations, 'that from which the Eucharist has its effect.' See also the next note.)

<sup>6</sup>In the remainder of this chapter, ample evidence will be provided that St. Thomas often cites real presence as a source of the various Eucharistic benefits. However, despite this fidelity elsewhere to the insight first explicitly expressed in III, 79, 1c, it is nevertheless true that in at least one place, Thomas has obscured the idea that there are two factors allowing the Eucharist to

be a source of salvation by blurring the distinction between the two causes of the goods of this sacrament. In III, 79, 2c, Thomas establishes that this sacrament causes the attainment of eternal life on grounds similar to those given in the first article. Particularly interesting is the argument that eternal life results from the Eucharist because of 'that from which the sacrament has its effect' (id ex quo habet effectum)--here, Thomas mentions both the real presence of Christ in this sacrament, and, his Passion which is here represented (scilicet ipse Christus contentus et passio eius repraesentata). But, instead of then explaining (in a way similar to his treatment of these two reasons in the first article) how each of these factors contributes in its own way to the power of the Eucharist to grant men entrance to glory, Thomas simply combines the two in his further explanation: the sacrament causes the attainment of heaven 'because it was by his Passion that Christ opened for us the entry to eternal life' (nam ipse Christus per suam passionem aperuit nobis aditum vitae aeternae). The combination of these two factors is, in a sense, understandable inasmuch as it is especially through the Passion that Christ gained the possibility of eternal life for men. But, the person of Christ should not be reduced to his work in this manner--in Aquinas, as in all great Christian theologians, person and work stand on their own terms, and the person of Christ is of saving significance for the members of the Church apart from any particular aspect of his salvific activity. Thus, rather than explain the importance of Christ's real presence solely in the light of the Passion (that is, because of what Christ did), to maintain the insight of III, 79, 1c (and elsewhere) that real presence constitutes in itself a distinctive cause of the benefits of this sacrament, Thomas should have proposed some consideration in the present text to suggest why the presence of Christ himself in the sacrament should especially warrant man's attainment of heaven. As has been said, the failure to do so here simply confuses the reader, who is unable, in this case at least, to discern any particular importance in the fact of real presence.

<sup>7</sup>The designation of the Eucharist as the 'sacrament of charity' appears at a number of places in the treatise on the Eucharist: see, e.g., III, 73, 3 ad 3; 79, 4 ob 1 and ad 3; 79, 6 ob 2; and, 80, 3 ob 2.

<sup>8</sup>Reference has been made to the motive of love impelling Christ's promise of real presence in the discussion of III, 75, 1c, in note 24 of the second chapter;

later in the text of the present chapter, we will discuss further this important passage. In addition to III, 75, 1c, see also III, 80, 5 ad 2, where Thomas says that mortal sin in a recipient 'conflicts with the love of Christ, of which this sacrament is the sign' (. . . contra caritatem Christi, cuius signum est hoc sacramentum). (It is, however, not clear from the context whether in 'caritas Christi', the genitive is subjective or objective.)

<sup>9</sup>Thomas mentions that the Eucharist causes the increase of the love of the recipient in a number of texts: see, e.g., III, 79, 1 ad 2, where he says the sacrament conveys both grace and the virtue of charity; III, 79, 3c, where he notes that though one in mortal sin does not normally receive forgiveness of his sin through the Eucharist, a man who receives the sacrament devoutly while not conscious of his sin does receive the 'grace of charity' (gratia caritatis), which perfects his contrition and thus effects forgiveness; and, III, 79, 6 ad 3, where he states that the sacrament 'increases charity' (auget caritatem). As in III, 79, 3c, Thomas associates charity with grace in III, 79, 1c; here, he says that the Eucharist grants men charity, and since 'charity cannot be without grace' (caritas sine gratia esse non potest), grace must be conferred in the Eucharist.

<sup>10</sup>The phrase quaedam actualis refectio spiritualis dulcedinis appears, e.g., in III, 79, 8c, and, III, 81, 1 ad 3. In III, 79, 8 ad 2, Thomas mentions an actualis delectatio which is connected with the spiritual eating of the Eucharist and seems to equate it with the 'fervor of charity' (fervor caritatis) which, as will be said immediately in the text below, reception of the Eucharist arouses.

<sup>11</sup>In III, 79, 4 ad 1, e.g., Thomas observes that the 'fervor of the act of charity' is kindled by this sacrament.

<sup>12</sup>See III, 79, 4c: res . . . huius sacramentil est caritas . . . quantum ad actum, qui excitatur in hoc sacramento.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.: . . . qui excitatur in hoc sacramento, per quem peccata venalia solvuntur. See also III, 79, 4 ad 3: caritas tollit per suum actum peccata venalia; and, III, 79, 1 ad 2.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas has related the importance of the Eucharist to the Church in numerous places in the treatise on the Eucharist. See, e.g., III, 73, 4c, where Thomas justifies the name communio for this sacrament on the grounds that this title properly denotes 'the unity of the Church, into which men are drawn together through this sacrament' (. . . ecclesiasticae unitatis, cui homines congregantur per hoc sacramentum); III, 74, 6c, where among the reasons advanced in favor of mixing water with the wine is that this signifies the 'effect of the Eucharist, which is the union of the Christian people to Christ' (hoc convenit ad significandum effectum huius sacramenti, qui est unio populi Christiani ad Christum); III, 74, 8 ad 2, where Thomas maintains that only a small amount of water should be added for this purpose, for then the water will be changed into the wine, thus symbolizing well 'that the people [through this sacrament] are incorporated into Christ' (cum aqua in vinum convertitur, significatur quod populus Christo incorporatur); and, III, 82, 9 ad 2, where Thomas argues that 'the unity of the mystical body is the fruit of the true body which is received' (unitas corporis mystici est fructus corporis veri percepti).

<sup>15</sup>For the historical background of these concepts, see R. King, "The Origin and Evolution of a Sacramental Formula," which traces their development from the Berengarian controversy to the time of Aquinas; King emphasizes two causes contributing to this development, the reaction of orthodoxy against Berengar's Eucharistic teaching, and, the influence of Augustine's concept of the sacrament as a consecration of the recipient.

<sup>16</sup>Thomas identifies bread and wine as the sacramentum tantum of the Eucharist in III, 73, 6c; in III, 79, 4c, he uses the phrase ipsum sacramentum as equivalent to sacramentum tantum, saying that in the Eucharist, this is the 'species or appearance of nourishing food.' See also III, 73, 3c, where he also employs ipsum sacramentum.

<sup>17</sup>Thomas affirms that corpus Christi verum is the res et sacramentum in this sacrament in III, 73, 6c. Later in the corpus, Thomas also defines the res et sacramentum here as ipse Christus passus, qui continetur in hoc sacramento. In III, 73, 1 ob 2, he says that the ipsum corpus Christi verum is the res et sacramentum.

<sup>18</sup>See, e.g., III, 79, 4c: res . . . huius sacramenti est caritas. In III, 73, 6c, Thomas says that the res tantum here is the sacramental effect (effectus huius

sacramenti), which he later identifies with grace. In this text, in which Thomas is seeking to determine the most important Old Testament figure of the Eucharist, Thomas says that in regards to the sacrament's effect, manna is the best figure, because of the sweetness (suavitas) of its taste. In view of his later preoccupation with the sweetness of love enjoyed by the recipient (see note 10 of this chapter) and the relation between the gifts of grace and charity (see note 9), it may well be that included under the 'grace' of III, 79, 6c is the infusion of love which delights men.

<sup>19</sup> See III, 80, 4c: the res tantum is the corpus Christi mysticum, quod est societas sanctorum; III, 73, 1 ob 2: corpus mysticum . . . est res tantum in Eucharistia; and, III, 73, 3c: res sacramenti est unitas corporis mystici, sine qua non potest esse salus.

<sup>20</sup> Numerous examples of the description of the sacrament in terms of food can be adduced. See, e.g., III, 73, 1c; 73, 3 ob 2 and ad 2, where the Eucharist is called man's spirituale alimentum; III, 73, 5 ob 1; 79, 1 ob 1; 79, 3 ad 2 and 3c, where the term spirituale nutrimentum is employed; III, 73, 1 ad 1; 73, 2c; 79, 2c, where Thomas mentions the refectio this sacrament brings. See also III, 73, 2c and 79, 1c, where Thomas says this 'spiritual food' is composed of spiritualis cibus and spiritualis potus. For the sacrament as spiritualis cibus, see also III, 79, 4c; 79, 6c; 80, 1 ob 1; 80, 10 ad 1; and as the potus fidelium, III, 78, 3 ad 1. Finally, the Eucharistic host is called vivus panis in III, 80, 3 ob 1.

<sup>21</sup> III, 77, 6c.

<sup>22</sup> See III, 77, 5c.

<sup>23</sup> In addition to III, 81, 3c, see ads 2 and 3; in ad 3, Thomas refers explicitly to his earlier teaching on concomitance.

<sup>24</sup> Among the passages which, taken in isolation would perhaps suggest that receiving Christ in the Eucharist is somewhat akin to physical nutrition, see especially III, 75, 5c; here, in the effort to explain why it was appropriate for divine providence to permit subsistent accidents, Thomas has provided two reasons which seem to suggest that men actually eat Christ himself. For example,

one reason that this arrangement is good is that men eat Christ in the sacrament; now, since men do not normally eat human flesh, it is better for them to eat Christ under the appearances of more typical food (quia non est consuetum hominibus, sed horribile, carnem hominis comedere et sanguinem bibere, proponitur nobis caro et sanguis Christi sumenda sub speciebus illorum quae frequentius in usum hominis veniunt). Moreover, Thomas states in the same text, subsistent accidents also mean that this sacrament will not become an object of ridicule to unbelievers, which would occur if we were to eat the Lord under his own appearances (ne hoc sacramentum ab infidelibus irrideretur, si sub specie propria Dominum nostrum manducemus). See also III, 73, 5 ad 1, where Thomas says that since things that nourish us come to us by eating them, and Christ nourishes us, per Eucharistiam manducamus Christum; and, III, 79, 3 ad 2, where Aquinas affirms that per hoc sacramentum homo sumit in se Christum per modum spiritualis nutrimenti.

<sup>25</sup> See III, 79, 1c: omnem effectum quem cibus et potus materialis facit quantum ad vitam corporalem, quod scilicet sustentat, auget, reparat et delectat, hoc totum facit hoc sacramentum quantum ad vitam spiritualem.

<sup>26</sup> III, 73, 3 ob 2 and ad 2.

<sup>27</sup> Later in this chapter, in the context of the attempt to demonstrate the close relation between initial justification and Eucharistic reception, we will return to the concept of a reception of the fruit of the sacrament without physical reception in the examination of reception in voto. In addition to the reasons noted in the text, a further reason for not taking too seriously or literally the 'food imagery' in the treatise on the Eucharist is that this language simply is inadequate to the depth and scope of effects offered to the Eucharistic recipient; for example, it is difficult to imagine how one can adequately discuss the experience of, and growth in, love which is consequent upon valid reception of the sacrament in terms of the use of food.

<sup>28</sup> The term sacramentalis manducatio first appears in the treatise on the Eucharist in III, 80, 1c: here, Thomas avers that this kind of eating is to receive the sacrament alone, without its effect (. . . sacramentalis manducatio, per quam sumitur solum sacramentum sine effectu ipsius).

<sup>29</sup>That sacramental eating involves a 'contact' with the Eucharistic Christ is suggested by the following passages: III, 80, 4 ad 4, where Thomas notes that benefitting from the sacrament is not inherent to sacramental eating, for although everyone who eats the sacrament receives not only the sacramental species, but also Christ under them, only those really joined to Christ (by faith and love) actually benefit from this contact (ille qui manducat, non solum sumit species sacramentales, sed etiam ipsum Christum, qui est sub eis . . . ad manducationem non sunt admittendi, nisi soli illi qui non solum sacramentaliter, sed etiam realiter, sunt Christo conjuncti); III, 81, 2c, where he says that at the Last Supper, Judas along with the other disciples corpus Domini et sanguinem suscepit; and, III, 82, 7 ad 1, where he affirms that peccator sumit corpus Christi sacramentaliter, albeit not fruitfully. See also the very important article III, 80, 3, where among other things, Thomas treats the question of brute animals eating the host; later in this chapter, we will refer in some detail to this article.

<sup>30</sup>For St. Thomas, the 'presence of Christ' constitutes an essential factor in a number of events in the spiritual life--most importantly, as will be seen, in the beatific vision and during the initial conversion to God. Implicit, too, in the stress on the value of his presence in the Eucharist for the faithful is the assumption of the intrinsic value of Christ for his members: in the fruitful reception of the sacrament, as at other crucial stages in human salvation, the availability of Christ denotes the possibility of entering more profoundly into the spiritual life. But, by virtue of his understanding of real presence, Thomas must concede that Christ also 'becomes available' to many unable to benefit from the reception of the sacrament--sinners, brute animals, those who eat the host unaware of its sacramentality. Thus, he allows that all receive the sacrament, and hence Christ, but not all receive his benefits--the latter, as will be shortly argued, is reserved for those who eat spiritually. That Christ can therefore be received apart from his benefits would seem, in turn, to demand that Thomas qualify his general affirmation of the value of real presence--instead of arguing that the realization of this presence is valuable because the source of life enters contact with the Church, he should have said that it is valuable for some because Christ enters into a relation with those faithful in a way which is beneficial to them. Conversely, he also should have said that for those incapable of benefitting, Christ is present in a fundamentally different

way: not as the source of life, but simply in a neutral, 'non-committal' way. That is, due to the possibility of many different kinds of recipients, including the non-spiritual, Thomas should have distinguished different gradations of Christ's own presence realized by the consecration, so as to ensure the personal quality of his presence for the faithful. But, he did not, being content to affirm in a general way the significance of the indiscriminate presence of Christ to all. Hence, as in his analysis of sacramental eating in the present text, some confusion is created by the mention of the situation unique to the Eucharist, that Christ is here 'eaten' (that is, comes into contact with all who receive) but to no effect. Thomas has nowhere sought to define what this 'proximity' of Christ via the species to the recipient entails; he simply allows that Christ is received in this eating and then adds that the reception of his effects depends in addition on the proper spiritual disposition in the recipient. Later in this chapter, we will return to examine the difficulties posed by Thomas' teaching on the unfruitful meeting with Christ in sacramental eating.

<sup>31</sup>In III, 79, 2 ad 2, the distinction between the offer or availability of grace, and, the personal appropriation of grace, is implicit in Thomas' discussion of whether the Eucharist allows a man to attain heaven. Ob 2 had denied that it does on the grounds that the sufficient cause of anything always produces its effect; but, as Augustine has noted, not everyone who receives the sacrament will attain eternal life. In response, Thomas notes that the same requirements obtain in the Eucharist as govern the fruitful orientation of the believer to the Passion. Now, although its power is sufficient for the salvation of all, the Passion does not produce its effect in those who are not related to it as they ought. Thus, so too, although many receive the sacrament, not all will enter heaven--for, those eat Christ (ipsum) in this sacrament unworthily (indecenter) will be excluded from the heavenly inheritance. Having in this way established the personal responsibility of the recipient, in conclusion, Thomas cites Augustine's admonition that since the sacrament and its power are two different entities, to benefit from the sacrament, the recipient should thus preserve his innocence and 'eat spiritually' (spiritualiter manducate) this heavenly bread (panem . . . coelestem).

<sup>32</sup>In III, 80, 1 ad 2, Thomas suggests that there are, in fact, two kinds of 'sacramental eating'. On the one hand, there is the sacramental eating which is completely fruitless, for by it, man fails to receive the



Eucharistic effects; it is to this kind of eating which we referred earlier in our initial description of the purely physical act of eating the sacrament. On the other hand, there is that 'sacramental eating' which is more closely related to 'spiritual eating,' which serves as its completion inasmuch as it discloses the spiritual attributes worthy of these gifts. In both kinds of 'sacramental eating,' by virtue of the consecration, the act of eating initiates some type of 'contact' with Christ. But, in the present context, the reference is rather to the second kind of sacramental eating, as the one which more especially parallels the 'spiritual reception' of the worthy recipient.

<sup>33</sup>See III, 80, 1c: . . . spiritualem manducationem, per quam quis percipit effectum huius sacramenti; 79, 8 ob 1: spiritualiter manducantes effectum huius sacramenti percipiunt.

<sup>34</sup>The phrase credit in Christum used in this passage recalls Thomas' incorporation of the Augustinian description of the act of faith in terms of 'believing God' (credere Deo), 'believing in God' (credere Deum), and, 'believing unto God' (credere in Deum), into his own discussion of faith's act in II-II, 2, 2. As was argued in the first chapter, for Aquinas, believing requires the contribution of both the intellect and the will--faith is in the intellect as its subject, which assents to a truth of faith under the influence of the will. Now, as Thomas says in II-II, 2, 2c, it is its reference to its object that is the basis for understanding the act of any power. Thus, since the will and intellect are both involved here, we can understand the act of faith not only as the intellect is related to its object, but also in terms of the relation to it of the will. With regard to the latter, the will is related to the object of faith, God, as to its end--therefore, inasmuch as the will is drawn to its end, which is the proper object of charity, by love, Thomas here allows the description of the act of faith as 'believing unto God' (credere in Deum) that is, as being drawn out towards God, with the pledge of love informing the movement of the intellect.

With regard to the former, as was argued in the second chapter in our description of Thomas' discussion in II-II, 1, 1, whether God is the object of faith, since faith is a cognitive habit, two elements can be distinguished in its object: the material object, and, the formal objective. Hence, the act of faith too in terms of the relation of the intellect to its object can be described in two ways. With reference to the material object of faith,

because nothing is proposed for our belief unless by virtue of some relationship to God, the act of faith is rightly said to be credere Deum, believing that something about God is true. But, men affirm the truths of faith only on the basis of the authority of God, the formal objective of faith. Hence, the act of faith also entails credere Deo, believing God, as the medium of our assent. In this way, Thomas assimilates Augustine's threefold description of faith into his own analysis.

Despite the use of credere in Christum in the present text, Thomas makes scant use of these traditional formulae in the treatise on the Eucharist. For example, in addition to III, 80, 2c, this phrase seems to appear again only in III, 80, 3 ob 1 and ad 1, where Thomas insists that credere in Christum is essential to spiritual eating. For an instance of credere Christum, see III, 80, 5 ad 2. However, Thomas does not seem to have used credere Deo or Christo in this treatise; rather, as in III, 75, 1c, Thomas has revealed in less direct fashion his conviction that Eucharistic belief rests on God's authority.

Finally, the use of credere in Christum in III, 80, 2c, suggests, as has been said, that love, as well as faith, is required for spiritual eating. Thus, even in this passage, Thomas has implied the value of love for fruitful reception; for more explicit affirmations of the importance of love in this regard, see the following discussion in the text.

<sup>35</sup> III, 80, 2c.

<sup>36</sup> See III, 78, 3c and 3 ad 6.

<sup>37</sup> III, 80, 2 ad 2.

<sup>38</sup> III, 80, 2 ad 3.

<sup>39</sup> See the discussion in note 25 of chapter one.

<sup>40</sup> III, 82, 6 ad 3.

<sup>41</sup> III, 80, 1c.

<sup>42</sup> III, 80, 4c.

<sup>43</sup>III, 79, 3 ad 2: per hoc sacramentum homo sumit in se Christum per modum spiritualis nutrimenti, quod non competit mortuo in peccatis. In III, 79, 3c, Thomas lists two reasons why the mortal sinner is unable to benefit from his sacramental reception, that spiritual food is only for those who are spiritually alive, and, that the union with Christ achieved through the sacrament is impossible for one bound to sin: non est conveniens susceptor huius sacramenti, tum quia non vivit spiritualiter, et ita non debet spirituale nutrimentum suscipere, quod non est nisi viventis, tum quia non potest uniri Christo (quod fit per hoc sacramentum), dum est in affectu peccandi mortaliter.

<sup>44</sup>See also III, 80, 4 ad 1: peccatores, qui defectum fidei formatae patiuntur circa Christum, repelluntur a contactu huius sacramenti.

<sup>45</sup>III, 73, 4c.

<sup>46</sup>III, 79, 2 ad 1. See also III, 73, 6 ob 3: potissima virtus huius sacramenti est quod introducit nos in regnum caelorum, sicut quoddam viaticum.

<sup>47</sup>For this description of the content of the beatific vision, see II-II, 1, 8c: duo . . . nobis ibi videnda proponuntur, scilicet occultum divinitatis, cuius visio nos beatos facit; et mysterium humanitatis Christi, per quod 'in gloriam filiorum Dei accessum habemus.'

<sup>48</sup>III, 73, 4c.

<sup>49</sup>Despite the value of Eucharistic reception, Thomas acknowledges that it does not cause in the recipients of the sacrament the complete realization of the gifts--e.g., love, the unity of the Church effected through love--that will be theirs in heaven. See, e.g., III, 79, 2c, where Thomas argues that attaining heaven is an effect of this sacrament can be seen from the things through which the sacrament works its effects, namely, the usus sacramenti and the sacramental species; for, the refreshment of spiritual food and the oneness (unitas) signified by the species are gained in the present life especially through the Eucharist, although, as Thomas adds immediately, perfect refreshment and unity are reserved to heaven (refectio cibi spiritualis et unitas significata per species panis et vini habentur quidem in praesenti, sed imperfecte, perfecte autem in statu gloriae).

<sup>50</sup>In the treatise on the sacraments in general, in III, 65, 3c, Thomas has offered three reasons for saying that the Eucharist is the 'greatest sacrament'. First, for the others only have an instrumental power to grant grace, while Christ himself, the source of grace, is present substantially in the Eucharist; second, for the others are ordered to the Eucharist as to their end--e.g., order is necessary for its consecration; baptism, for receiving it; penance and extreme unction, to prepare for worthy reception; and, third, for church ritual suggests this, inasmuch as the celebration of the other sacraments almost always ends with the reception of the Eucharist. In III, 73, 3c, Thomas repeats the second reason, when he explains that the Eucharist can be called the goal of the other sacraments, because they 'sanctify us and prepare us to receive the Eucharist or to consecrate it.' See also III, 78, 4c, where on account of real presence, Thomas affirms that the sacrament is 'greater in dignity' than the others.

<sup>51</sup>See, e.g., III, 80, 2 ad 1: sumptio Christi sub hoc sacramento ordinatur, sicut ad finem, ad fruitionem patriae.

<sup>52</sup>III, 80, 2c.

<sup>53</sup>That faith in itself 'anticipates' the final vision of God is a notion that has some prominence in the treatise on faith; see, e.g., II-II, 1, 6 ad 1: 'Faith is concerned chiefly with the realities we hope to contemplate in heaven;' in this place, Thomas then proceeds to quote in support the important passage from Hebrews (11:1), which states that 'faith is the substance (that is, the beginning, first realization) of the things to be hoped for;' for a more complete exegesis of this passage in Aquinas, see II-II, 4, 1c. In addition to II-II, 1, 6 ad 1, see also II-II, 1, 5c, where he states that the angels now contemplate the Trinity and, as in III, 80, 2c, points out the inferiority of the present experience of man: 'thus what we believe in, they see.'

<sup>54</sup>This description is taken from III, 79, 3c.

<sup>55</sup>Thomas mentions that the Eucharist works as 'spiritual food and medicine' for the preservation of the recipient from future sin by fortifying him inwardly in III, 79, 6c: Christo coniungit per gratiam roborat spiritualem vitam hominis, tanquam spiritualis cibus et

spiritualis medicina. For other descriptions of the personal importance of communion with Christ, see also III, 79, 5 ad 1, where Thomas says that the Eucharist is given to a man 'as if for nourishing and perfecting him through Christ' (datur homini . . . Eucharistia . . . quasi nutriendo et perficiendo per Christum), and, III, 82, 3 ad 3, where he states that in the Eucharist, a man is brought to completion in himself by union with Christ (. . . hoc sacramentum . . . quo perficitur homo secundum se per conjunctionem ad Christum).

<sup>56</sup>In addition to the texts noted earlier in this chapter on the importance of this sacrament for the Church, see III, 79, 5c: the Eucharist was instituted ad spiritualiter nutriendum per unionem ad Christum et ad membra eius.

<sup>57</sup>III, 64, 7c.

<sup>58</sup>The contrast between reception in voto and in re is found in III, 80, 1 ad 3. In III, 79, 3c, Thomas distinguishes between the sacrament received voto and actu.

<sup>59</sup>III, 68, 2c.

<sup>60</sup>The use of the words votum and desiderium in this passage from the treatise on Baptism as virtual equivalents is repeated in the treatise on the Eucharist at a number of places: see, e.g., III, 80, 11c, where Thomas affirms that spiritual eating includes the votum or desiderium to receive the sacrament; III, 80, 1 ad 3, where after noting the possibility of receiving the sacrament in voto if not in re, Thomas mentions that men can eat the sacrament spiritually before actually receiving it propter desiderium sumendi ipsum sacramentum; and, III, 73, 3c, where he notes that since this type of reception is possible, the inability to receive the sacrament does not prevent the attainment of heaven--for salvation, it suffices to hold the Eucharist in voto, sicut et finis habetur in desiderio et intentione.

<sup>61</sup>The teaching of III, 68, 2c on the origination of votum in 'faith working through love' is recalled in III, 80, 10 ad 3; here, Thomas says that for reception of this sacrament, reverence is needed, and adds that reverence is a mixture of timor and amor--timor, for from this arises the humilitas appropriate to sacramental

reception; amor, for the desiderium of eating the Eucharist is dependent on love.

<sup>62</sup>III, 79, 3 ad 3.

<sup>63</sup>See note 9 of the present chapter for a brief discussion of this case in which the forgiveness of mortal sin is achieved through the Eucharist.

<sup>64</sup>In III, 73, 3c, there is a lengthy discussion about the need to receive the sacrament at least 'by desire'. As Thomas observes here, the res sacramenti of the Eucharist is the unity of Christ's mystical body, which is absolutely necessary for salvation, because outside the Church there is no salvation (res sacramenti est unitas corporis mystici, sine qua non potest esse salus: nulli enim patet aditus salutis extra Ecclesiam). Nevertheless, he adds, the great importance of this sacrament does not mean that those prevented from receiving will not attain salvation, for the res sacramenti can be held before its reception, ex ipso voto sacramenti percipiendi. Thus, as he says in concluding this part of the discussion, ante perceptionem huius sacramenti, potest homo habere salutem ex voto percipiendi hoc sacramentum.

<sup>65</sup>That men can receive the fruit of this sacrament 'by desire', however, should not be viewed as support for not receiving the sacrament when opportunity to do so is provided. In a couple of places in the treatise on the Eucharist, Thomas has insisted that it is incumbent on Christians to receive when they can. Thus, for example, in III, 80, 1 ad 3, after noting that there can be spiritual eating without sacramental eating on account of the possibility of reception 'by desire' (the idea is also stated in III, 78, 1 ad 4), without explaining why it is so Thomas adds that spiritual eating connected with sacramental eating is better, for the sacramental effect is here produced more fully than by desire alone (nec tamen frustra adhibetur sacramentalis manducatio, quia plenius inducit sacramenti effectum ipsa sacramenti susceptio quam solum desiderium). In III, 80, 11c, Thomas argues explicitly for actual reception whenever possible in his discussion about whether it is lawful to abstain altogether from the sacrament. As he says here, spiritual eating means to be incorporated into Christ. Now, included in spiritual eating is the votum or desiderium of receiving the Eucharist. Hence, since incorporation in Christ is necessary for salvation, the votum of receiving this

sacrament is required for salvation (sine voto percipiendi hoc sacramentum non potest homini esse salus). Yet, he concludes, this does not allow men to abstain from actual reception, for a votum would be pointless unless fulfilled upon opportunity.

<sup>66</sup>In III, 79, 1 ad 1, Thomas proceeds to note that this desire for the sacrament may be a person's own, as in the case of an adult, or that of the Church, as in the case of an infant; reference has been made to the function of the Church in 'desiring' the Eucharist on behalf of infants in note 105 of chapter 2.

<sup>67</sup>See III, 80, 1 ad 1--circa baptismum et alia huiusmodi sacramenta similis distinctio adhibetur. Nam quidam suscipiunt tantum sacramentum, quidam vero sacramentum et rem sacramenti.

<sup>68</sup>See III, 80, 3c.

<sup>69</sup>In III, 80, 3 ad 3, Thomas also notes those men who eat the consecrated host unaware of its sacramentality. For these men, as for the mouse, their eating is merely 'accidental'. Nevertheless, such eating too brings Christ into a 'relation' with these men, one which is just as devoid of any spiritual significance (and, indeed, of content) as sacramental eating. As for the sinner, it is clear that his eating is, at least, 'sacramental'. Yet, in Thomas' thought, it shares the same ambiguity plaguing so-called 'accidental' eating--Thomas merely tells us that in such eating, Christ comes in 'contact', but does not explain how, on his presuppositions, this, or any similar contact with the Lord, can be fruitless.

<sup>70</sup>As was observed in the second chapter (see especially note 16), the Eucharist is unique among the sacraments of the New Law, for while the others are completed in usu, this sacrament alone is perfected in the consecration of its matter. The distinctiveness of the Eucharist in this regard, as was pointed out there, is derived from the substantial presence of Christ under the species. Nevertheless, as was also explicitly stated, this fact cannot be taken as justification for abstention from Eucharistic reception, for real presence, in turn, as has been amply demonstrated in this chapter, is itself ordained to the bestowal of Christ's gifts to his beloved. In this sense, it is possible to speak in the case of the Eucharist of a 'secondary' perfection which involves its

proper use, the employment of the sacramental species and contact with the Christ therein contained, by the faithful alone. For this idea of the use of the sacrament as a 'secondary' perfection as employed by St. Thomas himself, see III, 78, 1 ad 2. Thomas has mentioned in many places in this treatise that the use of the Eucharist is proper to the faithful alone; see III, 74, 7c, where he says that usus fidelium is consequent upon the consecration; III, 74, 2c, where he affirms finis . . . huius sacramenti est usus fidelium; and III, 76, 1 ob 2: Christus est in hoc sacramento secundum quod competit refectio  
fidelium.

<sup>71</sup>III, 75, 5c. For a more complete description of the immediate context of this statement, see note 56 in the second chapter.

<sup>72</sup>See, e.g., I-II, 114, 1c; the following discussion is based on this text.

<sup>73</sup>See I-II, 114, 1 ad 2.

<sup>74</sup>It is interesting to observe that in a brief article which seeks to evaluate Aquinas' treatment of the Pauline corpus, the important student of both Aquinas and Luther, Otto Pesch, has concluded that despite superficial dissimilarities, at bottom, Thomas' treatment of merit is compatible with Luther's acceptance of a legitimate place for Christian 'work' proceeding from faith (and love); see, "Paul as Professor of Theology," p. 596.

<sup>75</sup>See, e.g., I-II, 111, 2c, and, the 'foreword' to I-II, 113.

<sup>76</sup>I-II, 114, 2c.

<sup>77</sup>See also I-II, 114, 3c, where Thomas argues that since by grace men have become 'sharers' of the divine nature and been adopted as 'sons of God', the inheritance of heaven is now 'owed' to Christians by the very right of adoption.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>I-II, 114, 5 ad 3: 'Every good work performed by man proceeds from the first grace as principle and source' (omne bonum opus hominis procedit a prima gratia sicut a principio).



<sup>80</sup>I-II, 114, 4c.

<sup>81</sup>I-II, 114, 3c.

<sup>82</sup>See I-II, 114, 3 ad 3, and, 114, 8 ad 2.

<sup>83</sup>I-II, 114, 3 ad 2.

<sup>84</sup>See, e.g., I-II, 114, 3c; 4c; 6c; and, especially I-II, 114, 1 ad 1: 'Man merits in so far as he does by his own will what he ought to do' (homo in quantum propria voluntate facit illud quod debet meretur).

<sup>85</sup>I-II, 114, 1c.

<sup>86</sup>I-II, 114, 3c.

<sup>87</sup>The term appears, e.g., in I-II, 114, 6c.

<sup>88</sup>See I-II, 114, 4 ad 3, here quoting Galatians 5:6: fidei actus non est meritorius, nisi fides 'per dilectionem operetur.'

## CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, J. S. Abela, "Trans-Substantiation or Trans-Signification?", p. 685.

<sup>2</sup>Davis' critique of the Thomistic understanding of substance and the assertion of its irrelevance in the consideration of certain problems posed by Christ's presence in the sacrament, which is outlined in the text below, are advanced in "The Theology of Transubstantiation," pp. 16ff.

<sup>3</sup>See Ibid., p. 16, where Davis defines the Aristotelian 'substance' in this fashion.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 18: "Most of what is found in bread and wine exists in exactly the same state as it would outside the bread and wine."

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 12. See also P. Schoonenberg, "Transubstantiation: How Far is This Doctrine Historically Determined?", p. 81; J. de Baciocchi, "Présence eucharistique et transsubstantiation," p. 155; and, of course, the valuable reflections on the meaning of 'substance' at different stages of the history of Eucharistic thought in E. Schillebeeckx, The Eucharist, pp. 72ff.

<sup>7</sup>It is of course crucial to the success of this modern approach to the Eucharist that it not be bound to an 'outmoded' sense of 'substance'. Hence, these writers have devoted a great deal of energy to the examination of the use of 'substance' in the official teachings of the Church in order to determine whether the use of this word by the Church necessarily implies its Aristotelian connotations. The most important work in this regard has been done by Schillebeeckx who discusses the Tridentine formulation of the doctrine of real presence in the first chapter of The Eucharist. On the basis of an evaluation of both the formal discussions of the Council about the

Eucharist (pp. 29ff.) and certain modern theories on this question (e.g., pp. 60ff.), Schillebeeckx concludes, in the first place, that Trent's use of the word 'substance' does not in itself denote an Aristotelian content in this word--in employing the word, Trent was simply adhering to a tradition of the description of the Eucharist in terms of 'substance' which in fact predates the insinuation of Aristotle into Eucharistic thought. But, secondly, Schillebeeckx quickly adds that personally, he is convinced that although the Fathers at Trent did not thereby 'canonize' the Aristotelian meaning of the word, they nevertheless undoubtedly all conceived the Eucharistic change as involving the conversion of (precisely) Aristotelian substances--given the state of thought at that time, they would have had to do so, in the interest of understanding the important truth of real presence in the most appropriate terms available to them (See, e.g., pp. 56ff.). Schillebeeckx's point here, of course, is that just as these men could (and had to) understand this dogma in this way, in our own interpretation of this truth of the faith, the changing circumstances of thought require that contemporary man, too, must free the term from its earlier encrustations and interpret 'substance' in a way more congenial to his own thought-processes (See, e.g., p. 62). Schillebeeckx's analysis has been followed rather closely by Schoonenberg, art. cit., pp. 82-85. See also Davis, art. cit., p. 12, where he states that Trent employed the word 'substance' not primarily because of Aquinas, but because of its use by other councils, some of which were earlier than Aquinas and the influence of Aristotle.

<sup>8</sup>Davis, art. cit., pp. 16 and 21.

<sup>9</sup>See, e.g., J. Powers, "Mysterium Fidei and the Theology of the Eucharist," p. 21f., and, Schillebeeckx, op. cit., p. 128; the following discussion in the text is based on pp. 128ff.

<sup>10</sup>See also J. de Baciocchi, art. cit., pp. 151ff.

<sup>11</sup>See E. Schillebeeckx, "Transubstantiation, Transfinalization, Transignification," p. 328, and, op. cit., pp. 103ff.

<sup>12</sup>For a fine description of how Eucharistic presence is expressly oriented to the salvation of men in this new account of the Eucharist, see E. Schillebeeckx, art. cit., p. 328.

<sup>13</sup>P. Schoonenberg, "The Real Presence in Contemporary Discussion," p. 5; see also E. Schillebeeckx, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>14</sup>E. Schillebeeckx, art. cit., p. 335; see also op. cit., pp. 110-1, and, P. Schoonenberg, "The Real Presence in Contemporary Discussion," p. 8.

<sup>15</sup>C. Davis, "The Theology of Transubstantiation," p. 23.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>17</sup>"Understanding the Real Presence," p. 174.

<sup>18</sup>The following discussion in the text is based on Schoonenberg's articles, "The Real Presence in Contemporary Discussion," and, "Presence and the Eucharistic Presence."

<sup>19</sup>"The Real Presence in Contemporary Discussion," p. 7.

<sup>20</sup>See, "Presence and the Eucharistic Presence," p. 48, where Schoonenberg stresses the need for this 'interaction' even in the Eucharist to realize the deepest meaning of presence; otherwise, the 'offer' of himself by Christ will remain unfulfilled and constitute, as it were, a less profound expression of presence.

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