

ON THE ESSENCE OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

Regarding the essence of the sacrifice of the Mass, we may distinguish two questions: that of the physical essence, *i. e.* which part of the Mass is or contains the sacrifice (whether the Consecration, the Offertory, Communion, etc.) and that of its metaphysical essence, *i. e.*, under what aspect such part is formally said to be a sacrifice (whether because it is merely an oblation of the Body of Christ, or also a real, although sacramental, immolation, or a true representation of the oblation and immolation of the Cross). While the former question has already been quite firmly settled among modern theologians, who commonly hold that the sacrifice is performed essentially in the act of consecration, the latter, abstracting from the close relation between the two, is still adrift on the *mare magnum* of theological disputes, nor does it seem to be approaching the secure harbor of a common opinion. It still remains the *vexata quaestio* or the *crux theologorum*.

This question, in itself as old as tradition, acquired its new, peculiar and controversial status after the Council of Trent and gave origin to some ten to fifteen different opinions which, for the sake of practical clarity, can be reduced roughly to three broad classifications: immolative sacrifice (main exponents: Suarez, Bellarmine, Lugo, Lessius, Billot), oblationary sacrifice (Lepin, De la Taille), representative sacrifice (Vasquez, Casel, Vonier, Masure).

Our purpose is not to give a complete account of these opinions, their arguments and their value,¹ but to emphasize the greater probability of the third opinion of the representative sacrifice, as essentially distinct from the others, and to further explain and establish it, holding firmly to the concept of representation of the Cross, which, in an unbroken line, comes down to us from the mouth of Christ through Tradition and the Documents of the Church.

¹ Cf. our treatise *De Eucharistia* (Milwaukee 1948) II 867-1026; M. Lepin, *L'idée du sacrifice de la Messe*, 3 ed., Paris 1926; F. Kramp, "Scripta nuper edita de sacrificio Missae," *Gregorianum* 2 (1921) 416-442; E. F. Dowd, *A Conspectus of Modern Catholic Thought on the Essence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice*, Washington 1937; A. Piolanti, "Il sacrificio della Messa e la sua essenza," *Divus Thomas* (Piacenza) 54 (1951) 3-19.

I

At the *Last Supper*, when giving the Apostles the power to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice, Christ described it as a commemoration of His passion, i.e., of the Sacrifice of the Cross: "Do this in remembrance of Me."² The words "Do this" mean: "Offer this eucharistic sacrifice," as is defined by the Council of Trent: "By these words . . . Christ . . . ordered the Apostles and their successors to offer His Body and Blood";³ the words "In remembrance of Me" mean: "In remembrance of My passion, i.e., of the sacrifice of the Cross," as interpreted by constant Tradition.

On the basis of these words *Tradition*, up to the twelfth century (i.e., up to the time when theologians began to formulate the direct and explicit question as to how the Eucharist is a true and proper sacrifice), professed the Mass to be a true sacrifice, essentially commemorative and representative of the sacrifice of the Cross. Some of the Fathers emphasized this idea of representation to the point of asserting, formally or equivalently, the sameness and the oneness of the two sacrifices. We will quote only a few among the strongest and most indicative expressions.⁴ St. Cyprian: "The sacrifice which we offer is the passion of the Lord."⁵ St. Ambrose: "Christ is offered [in the Mass]: but He is offered as man, as if receiving [i.e., suffering] the passion."⁶ Maximus of Turin: In the Mass "*the death of the Lord is celebrated daily.*"⁷ Gregory the Great: Christ "in His mystery [of the Mass] suffers again for us"; we "offer to Him the host of His passion"; "This sacrifice [of the Mass] always imitates the passion of the Only-begotten Son."⁸ Chrysostom: "We offer, indeed; but we recall to memory His death. . . . Therefore *the sacrifice is one* [with the sacrifice of the Cross]. . . . *We do not offer*

² Luc. 22.20.

³ Sess. 22, can. 2, *Denz.* 949.

⁴ See others in our treatise *De Eucharistia* (Milwaukee 1948) II 919-922.

⁵ *Ep.* 63. 17: "Passio est enim Domini sacrificium quod offerimus" (*ML* 4. 398 sq.).

⁶ *De officiis min.* 1. 238: "Quasi recipiens passionem" (*ML* 16. 100 f.).

⁷ *Serm.* 77: "Mors Domini quotidie celebratur" (*ML* 57. 690).

⁸ *Hom.* 37 in *Evang.* 7: "In suo mysterio pro nobis iterum pati" (*ML* 76. 1279); *Dial.* 4. 58 (*ML* 77. 425).

another sacrifice, but always the same; or rather we make a commemoration of the sacrifice."⁹ In the oblation of the Mass "Christ lies killed."¹⁰ Faustus of Riez: The institution of the Eucharist was necessary "in order that what was once offered in ransom, *may be celebrated continually*, through an unending mystery."¹¹ Augustine, who usually synthesizes the sense of preceding tradition in pregnant formulas which become the basis for further theological developments, calls the Mass emphatically: "*The Sacrament of memory*," adding that God wanted "the daily sacrifice of the Church to be a sacrament of the sacrifice of the Cross."¹²

The same expressions are transmitted and emphatically stressed by the various writers, who are, so to speak, the bridge between the Fathers and the scholastic theologians.

Paschasius: "This mystery of the death of Christ [i.e., the Mass] has, in commemoration, what the Flesh and Blood of Christ had once in the passion."¹³ Ratramnus: "That same oblation [of the Cross] is celebrated daily by the faithful, but in mystery."¹⁴ Gerard of Cambrai: "Christ, having once suffered and once died, daily in the Church suffers and daily dies, while, by His order, the memory of His passion is celebrated, and through the ministry of the priest the salutary mysteries of His Body and Blood are repeated."¹⁵ Stephen of Autun: "The immolation is repeated [in the Mass]: not that

⁹ *In Hebr., hom. 17. 2 sq.*: "Offerimus quidem; sed ejus mortem revocamus in memoriam. . . . Quamobrem unum est sacrificium. . . . Non aliud sacrificium . . . sed idem semper facimus; potius autem commemorationem facimus sacrificii" (*MG* 63. 131).

¹⁰ *De prod. Judae*, hom. 2. 5: "Verere argumentum illius oblationis: maceratus jacet Christus" (*MG* 49. 383).

¹¹ *Hom. de corpore et sanguine Domini*: "Ut coleretur vel jugiter, jure per mysterium, quod semel offerebatur in pretium" (*ML* 30. 272).

¹² *C. Faustum* 20, 21: "In Psalmis canitur: 'Sacrificium laudis glorificabit me.' . . . Hujus sacrificii caro et sanguis ante adventum Christi per victimas similitudinum promittebatur; in passione Christi per ipsam veritatem reddebatur; post ascensum Christi per sacramentum memoriae celebratur" (*ML* 42. 385). *De civ. Dei* 10. 20: "Cujus rei sacramentum quotidianum esse voluit Ecclesiae sacrificium" (*ibid.* 41. 298).

¹³ *Expositio in Mat.* 12, 26, *ML* 120. 894.

¹⁴ *De corpore et sang. Domini* 38, *ML* 121. 144.

¹⁵ *Acta synodi Atrebatensis* 2, *ML* 143. 1281.

Christ is killed, but His passion is represented in His presence.”¹⁶ Rupert of Deutz: “The whole sacrament of Christ’s altar is made of the wood of the vivifying cross, because His passion is the resume of the whole sacrifice [which is offered in the Eucharist].”¹⁷ Alger of Liège: “Once on the cross, daily on the altar, [Christ] is immolated and offered in a different way. . . . He is in the sacrament daily, not suffering, but represented as if suffering. . . . Such immolation is done by an act of passion and death, which is not real but imaginary.”¹⁸

From the middle of the twelfth century to the Council of Trent, the Scholastic theologians explicitly formulated the question as to how the Mass can be called a true and proper sacrifice; from Peter Lombard to St. Thomas, from St. Thomas to Cajetan who wrote shortly before the Council of Trent, the answer was explicit and unanimous: The Mass is truly a sacrifice because it is a representation of the sacrifice of the Cross.

Peter Lombard: “The question is whether the action performed by the priest is properly called a sacrifice or immolation. . . . To this we can briefly answer that the oblation and consecration of the priest is called a sacrifice and an oblation, because it is a memory and a representation of the true sacrifice and of the holy immolation which took place on the altar of the cross.”¹⁹

Peter of Poitiers: “[The Mass] is called an immolation for no other reason except that it represents the true immolation which once took place on the cross.”²⁰

It is true that Alexander of Hale²¹ and St. Albert the Great²² seem to add also the concept of a new oblation, saying that the Mass is said to be a sacrifice because it is the representation of the immolation of the Cross and the repetition, on the part of the priest, of the act of oblation, but such addition does not seem to alter substantially the common doctrine.

¹⁶ *De sacr. altaris* 13, *ML* 172. 1290.

¹⁷ *In Ezech.* 2. 27, *ML* 167. 1488.

¹⁸ *De sacr. corp. et sang. Domini* 1. 16, *ML* 180. 786-788.

¹⁹ *Sent.*, 1. 4, d. 12, n. 7, *ML* 192. 866.

²⁰ *Sent.*, 1. 5, c. 1, *ML* 211. 1256.

²¹ *Summa Theol.*, p. 4, q. 10, m. 7, a. 3.

²² *In 4 Sent.*, dist. 13, a. 23.

St. Thomas constantly brings in the representation of the Cross as the primary reason why the Mass is properly a sacrifice, adding, as a complementary reason, that of the efficacy of the Mass, i.e., the application of the fruit of the sacrifice of the Cross.²³

Undoubtedly the principal passage in the writings of the Angelic Doctor is 3 p., q. 83, a. 1, in which the question of the Eucharistic sacrifice is treated directly and *ex professo*. It reads as follows:

Whether Christ be immolated in this sacrament. My answer is that the celebration of the sacrament is called an immolation of Christ for a twofold reason: firstly, indeed, because, according to Augustine in his letter to Simplicianus: "The images of things bear the names of the things of which they are images; so that if we look at a picture or at a painted wall we say: 'This one is Cicero, that one is Sallust.'" The celebration of the sacrament, then . . . is a certain image representative of the passion of Christ which is his true immolation; and therefore the celebration of the sacrament is called Christ's immolation. . . . In another way the celebration of the sacrament is called an immolation of Christ, on account of the effect of Christ's passion, because through this sacrament we become partakers of the fruits of Christ's passion. For this reason, in a certain *oratio secreta* of a Sunday, we say: "As often as the commemoration of this victim is celebrated the work of our redemption is accomplished." As far, then, as the first mode is concerned, it could be said that Christ was immolated also in the figures of the Old Testament; there are the words of Apocalypse xiii: "Whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb which was slain from the beginning of the world." But as far as the second mode is concerned, it belongs properly to this sacrament that in its celebration Christ be immolated.^{23a}

Ibid., q. 22, a. 3, ad 2, St. Thomas briefly states the oneness of the two sacrifices, saying:

The sacrifice . . . which is daily offered in the Church, is not another sacrifice than that which Christ himself offered, but its

²³ *In 4 Sent.*, dist. 8, q. 1, a. 1, q. 3; 3 p., q. 22, a. 3, ad 2; q. 73 a. 4 corp. et ad 2; q. 74, a. 4, ad 3; q. 79, a. 7; q. 83, a. 1, corp. et ad 1-2. Cf. our treatise *De Eucharistia* (Milwaukee, 1948) II 926-927, 1021-1022; A. Hoffmann, "De sacrificio Missae juxta S. Thomam," *Angelicum* 15 (1938) 262-285; A. Vonier, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (Westminster, Md., 1946) 110 sq., 113, 145-157.

^{23a} The translation is taken from A. Vonier, *op. cit.* 146 sq.

commemoration. Wherefore Augustine says [*De civ Dei* 10. 20]: "Christ himself is at once the offerer and the oblation [in the sacrifice of the cross]; likewise He wanted the daily sacrifice of the Church to be the sacrament of these things."

Cardinal Cajetan (+1537), who wrote shortly before the Council of Trent, seems to give a very faithful interpretation of the mind of St. Thomas, as well as of the import of all theological tradition, in the following words:

Properly speaking, we cannot affirm that in the New Testament there are two sacrifices, or two hosts, or two oblations, immolations, and whatever names you choose, just because of the fact that Christ is a bloody host on the Cross and an unbloody one on the altar. There is only one host, once offered on the cross and persevering in a manner of immolation [*modo immolatio*] in the Eucharist by a daily repetition ordered by Christ. . . . In the New Testament the sacrifice or oblation is not repeated but the one and only sacrifice, once offered, perseveres in a manner of immolation; the repetition is found in the manner of persevering, not in the thing offered, nor does the manner, in which it is repeated, contribute to the sacrifice, directly and of itself; but only for the purpose of having an unbloody commemoration of the oblation of the cross [*"Nec etiam ipse qui repatitur modus concurrat ad sacrificium propter se, sed propter oblationem in cruce commemorandam incruente"*].²⁴

II

The Protestants based their denial of the existence of a true and proper sacrifice in the Mass, on two reasons: the oneness of the sacrifice of the New Law and the absence of any new immolation or destruction of Christ in the Mass. Such statement was the occasion for an official declaration on the part of the Church not only as regards the existence of this sacrifice, but also as regards its essence. Consequently a new era started for our question and a new field was opened for investigation by theologians.

The Council of Trent in its 22nd session declared the Mass to be: 1. "a true and proper sacrifice" (can. 1); 2. "a sacrifice by which the bloody sacrifice of the Cross is represented and its efficacy

²⁴ *De missae sacrificio*, c. 6, *Opuscula omnia* (Augustae Taurinorum 1582) III 428.

applied" (chap. 1); 3. "an unbloody immolation" (chap. 2) "under visible signs," i.e., "under the species of bread and wine" (chap. 1); 4. a sacrificial oblation "different only in the manner of offering" from the oblation of the Cross (chap. 2). Thus the Council gives us four characteristic notes, pertaining to the essence of this sacrifice: true sacrificial action, representation of the Cross, unbloody immolation under visible signs, and different manner of oblation. The first note has reference also to the existence of the sacrifice, the three others refer directly to the determination of its essence.

The first objection of the Protestants is answered in the second and fourth notes, for the Mass, by being only and essentially a representation of the Cross, different only in the manner of offering, does not add a new sacrifice to the sacrifice of the Cross, but only a new mode of the same sacrifice. The second objection is generically answered by the third note "Unbloody immolation" with no further explanation.

It is precisely on this second objection, which seemed to touch more directly the essence of the sacrifice, and on this answer of the Council, which appeared so mysterious and so generic, that the attention of the post-tridentine theologians was particularly focused, all the more so because it carried a speculative appeal to that "*fides quaerens intellectum*" which is the stimulant of professional theologians. It seems to us entirely natural that these professionals would have turned their eyes toward the fundamental and traditional explanation, given so consistently and so simply by their ancestors, namely that the proper and essential reason why the Mass is a sacrifice, is because it represents the Cross, and try to look keenly into it and exploit all its richness of truth and beauty, and hence explain the Tridentine "Unbloody immolation," as well as the "different manner of oblation" by the "representation of the Cross," which in the mind of the Council seems to be the keynote giving meaning to all others as the very echo of all traditional teaching. But perhaps the explanation, which had so easily satisfied a lucid and ever inquiring mind such as that of St. Thomas, at first sight seemed to be too simple, or even too empty of concrete reality, or maybe too hazardous and too difficult to pursue any further. When we see how easily so many theologians swerved from that traditional concept in

new directions, we cannot help admiring once more the simplicity and stability of the doctrine of St. Thomas. As Vonier puts it: "A long study of the Eucharistic doctrine of S. Thomas fills one with admiration for his power of grasping a truth and never swerving from it. When one sees how constant has been the tendency of pious men to slip from sacramental thought into natural thought one cannot help admiring S. Thomas, who does not show one single instance of such a lapse."²⁵

At any rate, in order to answer the Protestant objection more exhaustively and expound theologically the very answer given by the Council, three courses were open to Catholic minds: 1. either to look for some kind of destruction or change, affecting the humanity of Christ, as present in the sacrament; 2. or to deny the supposition of the objection, that is the necessity of a destruction in the sacrifice, besides the element of oblation, and consequently to interpret the word "immolation," used by the Council ("in cruento immolatur"), in the generic sense of sacrificial action, essentially consisting only in an oblation; 3. or to call into play the very destruction or death of Calvary, present in some way in the Eucharistic action.

III

The first course was also *the first adventure of the theologians*. This adventure split in two directions: the two theories of a formal destruction and of only a virtual destruction.

The *formal destruction* was proposed in three different ways. Suarez²⁶ considered the destruction of the bread, in combination, however, with the sacramental production of the body of Christ, i.e., in as much as it is all ordained to the production of the body of Christ, for, he says, a sacrifice consists not in a mere destruction of the victim, but in a productive destruction, i.e., in the transformation of the victim into a better state. This opinion seemed to change the concept of immolation and victim or to shift it, at least partially, from Christ to the bread. Bellarmine²⁷ considered a destruction in

²⁵ *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (Westminster, Md., 1946) 110 f.

²⁶ In 3 p., q. 75-83, disp. 73-76, especially disp. 75, s. 1, n. 11-12; s. 5, n. 2 and 6.

²⁷ *De Eucharistia*, l. 5, c. 27.

the body of Christ, as to its sacramental being, and, since this happens only in communion or rather in the following consumption of the species, he shifted the concept of immolation from consecration to communion, leaving to the first action only the concept of oblation. It seemed, however, a little hazardous to divert the essence of the sacrifice, or its specific note, from consecration to communion which does not show the essential feature of representation of the Cross. Hence, several theologians with *Lugo*²⁸ fell back on consecration to discover in it a real, although only equivalent and moral, destruction of the body of Christ, consisting in the sacramental privation or suspension of its natural functions. But not even this explanation satisfied, since the supposition of such privation in the body of Christ, even in its sacramental state, is altogether impossible and quite phantastic.

Hence the rise of the second and better opinion of a *virtual destruction*, advanced by *Lessius*²⁹ and *Gonet*,³⁰ according to whom the act of double consecration "per se et vi verborum" tends to separate the body and blood of Christ, although, accidentally and on account of the "vis concomitantiæ" which unites indissolubly the two parts of the glorious humanity, their separation does not take effect. The weakness of this opinion lies in its own strength, for, even granting its ambiguous principle of a consecration tending to separation, or implying a virtual separation, the logical conclusion should be only a virtual sacrifice, not an actual sacrifice, that is a sacrifice which would be, but in fact does not exist.

Thus, the first theological adventure failed; it had started from the right principle of the necessity of a true immolation, but used its strength in the wrong direction, while looking for an impossible immolation other than that of the Cross. However, this attempt, which was by far the commonest course taken by the theologians up to the end of the last century, has not been fruitless, for it has given rise, as to a last resource, to the subtler modern opinion of the so-called sacramental immolation or destruction, thus arriving at some

²⁸ *De Eucharistia*, disp. 19, sect. 5.

²⁹ *Opuscula, De perfectionibus divinis*, l. 12, c. 13, n. 95-97.

³⁰ *De Eucharistia*, disp. 11, a. 2, n. 61.

positive element of solution, if not a direct and real solution of the problem.

The *second theological adventure* took the second of the above mentioned courses, that is denied the necessity of an immolation or destruction, reducing sacrifice to oblation as to its essential and sufficient element. This opinion had already been long brooding and somewhat dreaming in older theologians (especially of the French Oratorian School), either mingling with the other commoner opinion or trying to stand by itself, but, it waxed strong and came out, as a well defined doctrine and a well planned attack on the old theological position, in the first decades of the present century, under the combined leadership of *Lepin*³¹ and *De la Taille*.³² Notwithstanding its logical unity and its attractive presentation, it was bound to fail and decline, on account of a vicious point in its starting principle, namely the absence of the essential element of immolation. It looks now like a big flare, whose lights are rapidly fading away.

However, it has also been a fruitful experience, for, under its attacks, the defenders of the crumbling oldest opinion, were obliged to remodel it for the best and come out with the refined, subtle, easy and elastic device of the *sacramental immolation*.

Again this is not a completely new theory, having been essentially formulated in the 16-17th centuries at least by *Salmeron*³³ and *Pasqualigo*,³⁴ but it is a new, well defined and consistent position first taken by *Billot*,³⁵ who seems to have little by little rallied the suffrages of the greater number of modern theologians. The essential

³¹ *L'idée du sacrifice de la Messe* (Paris, 1926) 737-758.

³² *Mysterium Fidei* (Paris, 1931), especially 195-205, 303-317. Cf. *Esquisse du mystère de la foi*, 2. éd., Paris, 1924. We are well aware of the peculiar aspects and elements in which the opinion of De la Taille differs from that of Lepin, particularly as regards the mutual relation between oblation and immolation, but the essential point, which we briefly and synthetically consider here, is common to both opinions. Cf. our treatise *De Eucharistia* (Milwaukee, 1948) II 998-1000, 1004-1008, 1014-1016.

³³ *Comm. in Evang. et Act.*, tract. 29 and 31.

³⁴ *De sacrificio novae legis*, tract. 1, q. 43.

³⁵ *De Ecclesiae sacramentis*, Vol. 1, q. 82-83, § 1-3 and thes. 54. There are a few changes in the latest editions (6th and 7th, 1929 and 1931) issued by the author himself.

statement of this opinion is that the immolation, required and sufficient for the Eucharistic sacrifice, consists in the apparent separation of Christ's body and blood under the two species of bread and wine. Its weakness lies principally in the fact that the destruction or separation element is once again shifted from Christ to the species of the bread, as Suarez had shifted it, perhaps in a more logical construction, to the substance of the bread, thus leaving behind the scene the real victim, the humanity of Christ, under the camouflage of the fallacious name of sacramental separation or state of sacramental death. Some theologians, however, have given this opinion a better presentation, saying that the sacrifice consists rather in the very separation of the sacramental *esse* of Christ following the double and distinct consecration, as outwardly shown by the two distinct species. Either way, this opinion may be considered as the last resource of the first adventure of the theologians in their search for a distinct immolation, proper to the Eucharistic sacrifice.

No wonder then, if, in these later years, any keen observer has noticed an increasing stream of silent or unconscious deserters, still believed to be under the same flag, leave step by step the grounds of this system and get confusedly together for a new and more promising adventure,³⁶ which may prove to be the final and successful attempt of the one catholic theology of all ages to regain the stream of the traditional concept on the Eucharistic sacrifice, steadily and unchangeably rolling underground, notwithstanding the confusion of wandering opinions.³⁷

³⁶ Cf. Masure, *Le sacrifice du Corps Mystique* (Paris [1949]) 30-38.

³⁷ C. De Muth does not seem to be aware of such theological current, when he writes in his review of our treatise *De Eucharistia*: "Doronzo expresses the hope that this return to the earlier simplicity will put an end to 'incessantibus nec foecundis inquisitionibus modernorum de essentia sacrificii Mossae.' This reviewer can only say regretfully that the hope is unfulfilled in his case. The clock has merely been turned back, and it seems that the modern theories are necessary, if not too successful, attempts to explain *how* it is the identically same *Christus passus* on Calvary and in the Mass. It seems that either Doronzo is not clear in defending his position on this point (an unlikely supposition in view of his shining clarity elsewhere in the book) or the theory in its core defies clarification" (In *Theological Studies* 10 [1940] 126).

This third adventure consists in calling into play the very destruction or immolation of Calvary and making it present in the Eucharistic sacrifice, as the essential and sufficient element of this same sacrifice. These theologians have taken, as the starting and ever accompanying principle, the second note assigned by the Council of Trent, namely the representation of the Cross, thus entering unmistakably the royal road of tradition. Some may have failed in their theological formulations or explanations, unable to put into exact words the intuition of their mind, or to give it the proper logical and scientific expression, but the principle they have assumed and the road they have entered, is a guaranty of success.

This theory of the relative or representative sacrifice is not really new. The old theologians up to the Council of Trent knew no other doctrine, as we have seen above. The Protestants themselves covered their own heresy with its name and label, to abuse it by splitting the two integrative and inseparable elements of true sacrifice and of essential representation of the Cross and inferring the denial of the first from the admission of the second, so as to make the Mass a bare commemoration of the Cross, stripped of all sacrificial reality; in a strikingly similar fashion the heresy of the Iconoclasts in the eighth century from the relativity of the cult of images had illogically argued to the denial of its reality. Even one or another Catholic theologian, as Renz and Wieland, was led to a similar dazzling mistake, as if the relativity of the rite would necessarily destroy or lessen the reality of the sacrifice, while on the contrary it is filled with it. With similar errors the field of heresies and theological opinions is crowded through the ages, for it is easy to exchange tinsel with gold and, as the common saying goes, "corruptio optimi pessima."

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, *Vasquez*,³⁸ following the lead of several theologians of the Council of Trent, formulated his theory of the relative sacrifice, as a reaction to the commoner opinion of the absolute sacrifice of the Mass, consisting in an immo-

³⁸ In 3^{um} partem S. Thomae, disp. 220, c. 3; disp. 222, c. 7-9; disp. 223, c. 4.

lation distinct from the immolation of the Cross. He taught: 1. The Mass is not an absolute sacrifice, but only and essentially a relative sacrifice. 2. Consecration, or the sacramental separation of Christ's body and blood, conditions, founds or contains the sacrifice, but it is not the sacrifice. 3. The essence of the sacrifice is the relation of that sacramental separation to the physical separation of Christ's body and blood on the Cross. 4. Being a relative sacrifice, the Mass does not need an immolation, provided this is found in the absolute sacrifice of the Cross. The first and second points are the right and essential elements of the theory of representative sacrifice, in as much as it is distinct from the theory of sacramental immolation; the third and fourth points are the wrong elements of the Vasquezian position, or a mere awkward formulation and interpretation of the right theory.

Several theologians have followed the main idea of Vasquez, as contained in the two first points: Véron, Roncaglia, Bouvier, Perrone, Welte, Souben, Lebreton, Götzmann, Schepens, Coghlan, Sanda. Lately it has received a sudden and vigorous impulse or quasi revival, by an increasing number of writers, who, because of some ambiguous phrases and of the widely employed expression of sacramental sacrifice, are often mistaken and classified as followers of the other modern opinion of the sacramental immolation. We may name, among others, the following authors, who particularly emphasize the representative character of the Eucharistic sacrifice and the essential oneness of the two sacrifices of the Cross and of the Mass: Gillet, O.P.,³⁹ O. Casel, O.S.B.,⁴⁰ A. Vonier, O.S.B.,⁴¹ E. Masure,⁴² C. V. Hérís,

³⁹ "Les harmonies de la Transubstantiation," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 8 (1914-1918) 258-269.

⁴⁰ *Liturgie als Mysterienfeier*, ed. 3-5, Freiburg, 1923; "Das Mysteriengedächtnis der Messliturgie im Lichte der Tradition," *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* (1926) 113-204; "Die Messopferlehre der Tradition," *Theologie und Glaube* 23 (1931) 351-367.

⁴¹ *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (Westminster, Md., 1946) 108-157. The first edition was issued in 1925.

⁴² *Le sacrifice du Chef* (10^eéd., Paris, 1944) 253-349; "Le signe de l'immolation sacramentelle," *L'Année théologique* 8 (1947) 184, 198; *Le sacrifice du Corps Mystique* (Paris [1947]) 9-39, 49-95, 151-154.

O.P.,⁴³ V. Bernardi,⁴⁴ J. De Séguier, S.J.,⁴⁵ G. Rohner,⁴⁶ W. Goossens,⁴⁷ F. Diekamp,⁴⁸ A. Hoffmann,⁴⁹ A. Sage, A.A.,⁵⁰ M. M. Philipon, O.P.,⁵¹ A. C. Gigon, O.P.⁵² Not everyone of these, nor of the other theologians whom we could add to the list, is very clear in his statements. Some of them seem to be still close to the opinion of sacramental immolation held by Billot; some others, on the contrary, are definitely much closer to the distinct opinion of a purely representative immolation; some seem to swing ambiguously between the two opinions. All, however, represent a wide group of tendencies toward the second. Three authors have given their mind a more definite expression and hence can be considered as the principal or clearest exponents of this opinion.

*Casel*⁵³ teaches that the sacrifice of the Mass is an actual and present renovation of the selfsame sacrifice of the Cross, acquiring, under the sacramental symbol, a new "*ubicatio et quodocatio*." At the Last Supper Christ did not tell the Apostles to offer, but to remember, therefore the Eucharist is essentially a remembrance of the passion. Such remembrance, however, is not subjective, i.e., a pure act of recalling to memory, but objective, i.e., an action reproducing, in this present time and space, the past reality. Thus the Mass is a

⁴³ *The Mystery of Christ* (transl. D. Fahey, Cork and Liverpool, 1950) 202-206. The first French edition was issued in 1927.

⁴⁴ "Se il sacrificio debba sempre essere in genere signi," *Divus Thomas* (Piacenza) 30 (1927) 514-517.

⁴⁵ "Quelques réflexions sur le sacrifice eucharistique," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 56 (1929) 289-299.

⁴⁶ "Mess opfer Kreuzesopfer," *Divus Thomas* [Freiburg] 8 (1930) 3-17, 145-174.

⁴⁷ *Les origines de l'Eucharistie sacrement et sacrifice* (Gembloux, Paris, 1931) 52-57.

⁴⁸ *Theologiae dogmaticae manuale* IV (versio latina secunda A. Hoffmann, Parisii, 1946) 237, 239, 245.

⁴⁹ "De sacrificio Missae juxta S. Thomam," *Angelicum* 15 (1938) 262-285.

⁵⁰ "En marge du Sacrifice de la Messe," *L'Année théologique* 6 (1945) 84-95.

⁵¹ *Les sacrements dans la vie chrétienne* [Paris, 1945] 147-155.

⁵² *Missa Sacramentum Crucis* (ed. 4, Taurini, 1949) 29-38.

⁵³ *Locis citatis*.

mystical, but real, transposition of the sacrifice of the Cross, or this same sacrifice acquiring a new place and a new time.⁵⁴

Such realistic interpretation of the representative sacrifice, by which the sacrifice of the Cross would become *physically present* in the Mass, gave rise to a hot controversy. It is to be rejected, not on theological grounds, for the principle of a sacrifice essentially representative and essentially one with the sacrifice of the Cross, is the soundest and most traditional of all, but rather on philosophical grounds, because of the simple impossibility of a past action acquiring a new "quandocation," i.e., being at once past and present. In vain Casel argues *a paritate* with the sacramental "ubication" of the Body of Christ: in the Eucharist Christ acquires sacramentally a new "ubication," therefore He can also acquire a new "quandocation." Evidently there is no parity, for two "ubications" are not exclusive of each other, as are two "quandocations" which imply a mutual succession and therefore the non-existence of the one during the existence of the other. For the same reason, it is in vain that De Séguier has tried to give this theory a philosophical explanation, which, however, appears to be quite phantastic. He says that the Body of Christ is "quandocated" intemporally in the sacrament with all the "quandocations" it ever had, among which is found the "quandocation" of the Passion, the only one, however, signified by the sacramental separation of the species.⁵⁵

Vonier, on the other extreme, seems to bring into the Mass *a purely representative presence* of the sacrifice of the Cross. The Mass is a sacrifice in as much as it is taken as one with the sacrifice of the Cross, i.e., as "*the prolongation*," or "*the representation*, pure and simple" (i.e., "literal rendering present—such is the true meaning of representation") or the "*sacrament in the full sense of the word*" of the sacrifice of the Cross.

⁵⁴ A brief but accurate presentation of the doctrine of Casel and of his direct followers, as *M. Schmaus, J. Pinski, A. Arnold, D. Feuling, G. Söhngen*, is given by L. Lercher, *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae* IV (ed. 3 retractata a Professoribus facultatis theologiae Oenipontanae, Oeniponte, 1948) 302-304.

⁵⁵ See the clever explanation given by De Séguier, *loc. cit.*, and the attack on it by P. De Vooght, "A propos d'une conception symboliste de la Messe," *Divus Thomas* [Piacenza] 35 (1932).

Separation of Body and Blood on the altar in itself, absolutely considered, would not make a sacrifice; nor would a figurative rite make a true sacrifice; but the two together, one as the human act of commemoration, and the other as the divine prolongation, the infinitely real inwardness, of that same act, make the Eucharistic sacrifice. . . . The Eucharist is perfect sacrifice because it is that *literal rendering present* such is the true meaning of representation of what there was on this earth of Christ after the "consummatum est" had been pronounced by him, when His Soul had been given up to the Father. . . . Let the [Eucharistic] sacrifice be sacrament in the full sense of the word, it cannot be a new sacrifice, but it must be the representation, pure and simple, of the historic or natural sacrifice.⁵⁶

Despite the ambiguous and forced expressions "Prolongation—Literal rendering present—Sacrament in the full sense of the word," it seems that this explanation is still the best given by the theologians along the line of the representative sacrifice. It only needs to be completed or further expounded.

Masure, dissatisfied with the two preceding views, considering the former too strong or too realistic and the latter too weak or too symbolistic,⁵⁷ tries to find a way in between them. The Mass is a sacrifice *because the body of Christ, which is the Passion itself* (taken not as an act, but as a habit or state) *is made really present* under the sacramental sign of the Passion. This, he claims, is the better and fuller explanation of the sacrifice essentially representative, or *sacramental sacrifice*, since it follows logically from the "doctrine of efficacious symbol" or sacrament, which contains or produces what it signifies.

The Church begins her sacrifice by a kind of sacramental immolation of the mere bread and wine, in the sense that she performs on them the signs of immolation, i.e., separation from profane things in the Offertory, offering to God, petition of consecration, divine acceptance. But at the very moment when this divine agreement would complete our sacrifice and cause the mere bread and wine to become the victim of our own sacrifice, it suddenly changes the material

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*, 112, 123, 135.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Le sacrifice de Corps Mystique* (Paris [1949]) 23 f., note 2; 35-37; 71 f., note.

elements into the Body and Blood of Christ, so that these elements are no longer the victim of our sacrifice, but through their remaining species, become only the sign of another victim, the Body and Blood of Christ, the victim of Calvary; a sign, however, which at the same time contains the thing signified, and hence a sacrament in the full meaning of the word. By containing the Body and Blood of Christ, the sacramental sign contains necessarily His Passion or the sacrifice of the Cross, for this sacrifice is not only an act, but also a state, the state of a victim now glorified and of an immolation which has no end. In this manner the immolation of the Church is changed into the immolation of Christ, it becomes the Mass, that is the sacrificial action, representing or rendering really present under sacramental signs the only sacrifice of the New Law, the sacrifice of the Cross. Thus, the meaning of the representative sacrifice is fully realized: the Mass is a sacrifice because it is the efficacious sign of the sacrifice of the Cross.⁵⁸

The weak spot of such clever construction is the identification of the Body of Christ with the Passion of Christ, or the equation: presence of the Body and Blood of Christ = presence of the Passion or of the sacrifice of the Cross. This Passion and Death in which the sacrifice of the Cross consisted, was a transitory act, once performed and irrevocably passed, and cannot be said to remain in the humanity of Christ, as an act and therefore as a sacrifice, no matter how real and physical the effects may be which are imprinted and left by it in that sacred humanity; hence in the Eucharist we have the presence *Christi passi*, not the presence *Passionis Christi*. Thus Masure seems to have failed in his endeavor to explain how the sacrifice of the Mass is essentially representative of the sacrifice of the Cross, or how the latter is contained in the former. He has, indeed, found a midterm between the physical presence of the Passion, advanced by Casel, and the purely symbolic presence of the same, advanced by Vonier, that is, the physical presence of Christ, but by

⁵⁸ *Le sacrifice du Chef* (10 éd., Paris, 1944), especially 279, 297 f., 301, 325, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332 f., 336 f., 347 f.; "Le signe de l'immolation sacramentelle," *L'Année théologique* 8 (1947), especially 188, 190 f.; *Le sacrifice du Corps Mystique* (Paris [1949]), especially 27 f., 29-32, 37, 38, 39, 49, 57, 58, 70, 71, 80, 83, 84, 85, 89.

this very fact, he has evaded the real question, or rather stripped the Eucharistic rite of every sacrificial element.

Since the physical presence of the sacrifice of the Cross in the Mass is philosophically impossible, as we have shown against Casel, there is only one course left open, namely to cling firmly and without swerving to the representative presence of the sacrifice of the Cross in the sacrifice of the Mass, and to try to find in it the essential constituent of the latter and the unifying principle of both.

IV

In our treatise on the Eucharist⁵⁹ we have taken this course, following faithfully in the steps of St. Thomas. We will now follow the same path, trying to clarify or complete some expressions which may have startled one or another theologian.

1. Since the Mass is a true and proper sacrifice, it necessarily contains in itself an actual oblation and immolation, the two essential notes of every sacrifice.

2. The oblation and immolation, contained in the Mass, *are the same as the oblation and immolation contained in the sacrifice of the Cross.*

The truth of this statement follows directly from the essential oneness of the two sacrifices, since the essence of the sacrifice is nothing else but oblation and immolation.

This essential unity, in its turn, follows necessarily from the traditional doctrine that the Mass is a sacrifice essentially representative of the sacrifice of the Cross, for, this means that the representation of the Cross is not only something attached and added, no matter how intimately, to the sacrifice of the Mass, but it is its very essence as a sacrifice, so that for the Mass to be a true sacrifice is to be the representation of the Cross; nor can we say that this representation is only one part of the essence, for an essence cannot be made up of different parts, unless they are imperfect parts of the same order, completing each other in a relationship of act and potency. Now, in all sound philosophy, the thing representing and the thing represented are formally one, as far as the reality contained in both is concerned.

⁵⁹ *De Eucharistia* (Milwaukee, 1948) II 1016-1026.

The same oneness of the two sacrifices is also directly (formally or equivalently) asserted by Tradition, as we have seen above (cf. Cyprian, Gregory the Great, Chrysostom, Faustus of Riez, Ratramnus, Gerard, Rupert, St. Thomas), and by the following Documents of the Church. The Council of Trent teaches that in the Mass we have the same host or victim. Taking this word formally, and there is no reason why we should not, it follows that the two sacrifices are one, since the victim specifies the sacrifice, being the thing offered and immolated; besides, the Council confirms this conclusion by adding that the only difference between the two sacrifices is the manner of offering ("*Sola offerendi ratione diversa*"), which means that the offering itself is the same and therefore the sacrifice is the same. The Roman Catechism, explaining the mind of the Council, explicitly states: "We profess, as it must be held, that what is performed in the Mass and what was offered on the Cross, is one and the same sacrifice." Leo XIII in his epistle to the bishops of Scotland, in 1898, affirms that the Eucharist "offers not only an empty similitude and commemoration of the reality [of the sacrifice of the Cross], but the reality itself, although in a different appearance."⁶⁰

In this point we have established the basic and essential element of the opinion of representative sacrifice, as generically held by the above mentioned theologians and as essentially distinguished from the opinion of sacramental sacrifice, as understood by Billot and followers.

Before proceeding to the further explanation, by which we reject the developments offered by some of them, especially Casel and Masure, it is well to subscribe to the following words of Vonier:

It is my conviction that unless we cling firmly to the sacramental concept of the Eucharistic sacrifice we cannot meet the Protestant difficulty. But if once we grasp the meaning of the sacrament, the Protestant difficulty vanishes, and the fundamental oneness of the Christian sacrifice becomes apparent. If the Eucharistic sacrifice were in any way a natural sacrifice it would be simply impossible to avoid the conclusion that there are two different sacrifices, and the query: Why two sacrifices? would be most justifiable. The circumstance that the second sacrifice

⁶⁰ *Epistola Encyclica "Charitatis Studium,"* 25 julii 1898, *Acta S. Sedis* 31 (1898) 12.

would take place under entirely different conditions would not save us from such a conclusion; if it be a sacrifice *in natura*, however it be disguised, it is truly another sacrifice, and not the same sacrifice. But let the sacrifice be sacrament in the full sense of the word, it cannot be a new sacrifice, but it must be the representation, pure and simple, of the historic or natural sacrifice. If there were in the Eucharistic sacrifice an immolation, or a mactation, or a death, or an heroic deed, not contained already in the sacrifice of the cross, all at once the Eucharist would become sacrifice number two, because in such a supposition something new has happened in the world of grace which did not happen on the Cross.⁶¹

3. The oblation and the immolation of the Cross are contained in the Mass *really, although not physically, but objectively and intentionally* ("realiter, non tamen in esse physico, sed in esse objectivo et intentionali"). They are contained really, because on the one hand the Mass is a real sacrifice, hence a real oblation and immolation, and on the other hand it is truly one same sacrifice with the sacrifice of the Cross, hence it must really contain the same oblation and immolation. They are contained only objectively and intentionally, because they cannot be contained physically, as past and present cannot be simultaneous.

4. When we say that the Mass contains the oblation and the immolation of the Cross, or that it is this same sacrifice in the objective and intentional order, *we do not mean only in the order of knowledge*, so that the Mass would stand for the Cross only in the path of our knowledge, as a means of knowing or remembering the Cross and be the Cross "ut cognita,"⁶² for the so-called "esse objectivum aut intentionale" is not confined to the sphere of knowledge, but embraces all signs, all relations, all movements, all tendencies, all finalities. By objective order in the present case we mean generically *an order of tendency or mediation or vicariability*, and specifically in the formal line of sacrifice.

⁶¹ *Op. cit.*, 134 f.

⁶² Such seems to be the meaning given to our opinion by A. Piolanti in his article "Un'osservazione sulla teoria sacrificale del P. Emanuele Doronzo," *Euntes Docete* 2 (1949) 121-123.

Since the Passion of Christ is essentially a sacrifice, i.e., an action, and a sacrificial action, the Mass, in order to represent the Cross or to be objectively the Cross, must be a *sacrificial action, standing for the sacrificial action of the Cross*; therefore, it must consist in the performance of an oblation and an immolation, which are wanted and done not for themselves but for the Cross, as a vicar of the Cross, just like a bishop, in order to be the vicar of the Pope, in some particular circumstance or place, has to stand for the Pope not only as a means for us of knowing or remembering the Pope but also as the performer of an action which stands for the action of the Pope and whose meaning and value derive entirely from its relative and vicarious character.

Two examples seem most appropriate to illustrate the idea. The so-called "*species expressa*," which is in itself and physically only an accident of my mind, distinct from the exterior object, in the act of knowledge becomes that same object "in esse objectivo et intentionali," understood in the specific sense of "esse cognitum et intelligibile," because that "*species expressa*" stands for another and is all vicarious of another in the line of knowledge, and only in that line. On the contrary, the relative cult, by which I adore the image of Christ, is the same with the absolute cult (which I intend to give to the person of Christ) "in esse objectivo et intentionali," but taken in the other specific sense of "esse activo-adorativum," because it stands for another and is vicarious for another, not in the line of knowledge (although the image of Christ stands for Christ in that line) but purely and formally in the line of adoration or adorative action. Likewise the Mass is the Cross "in esse objectivo et intentionali" not formally in the sense of "esse cognitum et intelligibile" (although the image of the Cross which is found in it is the Cross in this sense), but in the distinct specific sense of "*esse activo-sacrificale*," or "*esse oblativum et immolativum*."

5. Such objective or intentional presence of the Cross in the Mass is found and realized perfectly in *the act of consecration*, or in the Body and Blood of Christ as they undergo, so to speak, the act of consecration and become the terminus of the transubstantiation of bread and wine. We do not believe it could possibly be found in any

other action, even performed by, or in, the Body of Christ; however, we decline to discuss this question of pure possibility. By virtue of the double consecration, tending to Christ's Body and Blood as two formally distinct "termini ad quos," there is an intentional or objective or terminative separation of the sacramental "esse" or condition of Christ, shown also outwardly by the distinct words of consecration and by the remaining separated species of the two transubstantiated substances. This separation, of such an intentional, objective, terminative order, becomes "ipso facto" a sign, image, representation, nay even a presentation (act of making present in that same order), of the physical separation or death of Christ on the Cross.

6. *This sacramental separation, in itself and materially considered, is not the Eucharistic sacrifice itself*, for in the Mass we do not offer to God merely the sacramental separation of Christ (no matter how it is explained by Billot and other followers of the same general opinion), but we principally and formally offer Christ's passion and death on the Cross, otherwise the Mass would not be a sacrifice essentially representative of the Cross and there would be two sacrifices in the New Law. The truth of the above statement is also confirmed by the fact that if there had not been a sacrifice of the Cross and Christ had nonetheless instituted the Eucharist, as it is now in double consecration and species, the sacramental separation would not be a sacrifice, or at least would not be essentially the same as the sacrifice which we have now, and nevertheless its essential element of sacramental separation would still be the same.

Since we are mainly concerned with facts, again we do not discuss the question whether the sacramental separation could possibly, if God so willed, be sufficient in itself to constitute a distinct sacrifice, having perhaps a concomitant and necessary relation of image and commemoration of the Cross attached to it (precisely the way the other opinion of sacramental immolation, held by Billot and followers, conceives the existent sacrifice of the Mass). However, let it be said in passing, we do not even believe in that possibility, because the Body and Blood of Christ, which would be the victim of such futurable sacrifice, do not undergo any physical changes and their

separation is all of an objective, intentional and terminative order, since they are reached by the conversive action only as "termini ad quos," whose nature and role is purely to terminate, while the whole physical separation and change takes place only in the two conversive actions and in the two "termini a quibus," i.e., the bread and wine, which are not the victim of the sacrifice.

7. The sacramental separation therefore, materially considered, is only the condition, the base, the container, so to speak, of the Eucharistic sacrifice. *If we consider it formally, as the image and the vicar of the sacrifice of the Cross*, then that sacramental separation is indeed, really and totally, the Eucharistic sacrifice, but at the same time it is nothing else than the selfsame sacrifice of the Cross (the same immolation and the same offering), repeated and re-acted in another way, i.e., "non in esse et modo absoluto" but "in esse et modo relativo, vicario, objectivo, intentionali."

In other words, *in the Mass we do have a new immolation*, i.e., the sacramental separation of Christ's Body and Blood, and *we do make a new offering*, that of Christ as in the state of such sacramental separation, but this immolation and oblation are not formally the sacrificial immolation and oblation by which the Mass is said to be a true sacrifice, because they do not stand for themselves, they are not done or intended for themselves, they stand for another, i.e., for the physical immolation and oblation of the Cross, they are essentially vicar of the Cross, they make up an essentially relative sacrifice and hence they are essentially the sacrifice of the Cross itself, although "in esse vicario et objectivo."

In order that He might be able to repeat again and again the sacrifice of the Cross, Christ had to institute the sacramental mystery, i. e., a ritual immolation of Himself, vicarious and representative of the physical immolation of the Cross, and a ritual oblation of Himself thus ritually immolated, vicarious again and representative of the oblation of the Cross. In this combined ritual action, the sacrifice of the Cross itself is repeated, although in another way, i. e., in a relative and vicarious way, and the absolute and only sacrifice of the new Law revives before us as a relative sacrifice: the Cross comes back to us as the Mass.

All is vicarious and relative in this sacrifice: the immolation, the oblation, the priest himself who acts and speaks not for himself but for Christ, to whom "he lends his tongue, and gives his hand."⁶³ For this reason we do not even need, on the part of Christ, an actual act of oblation of the past Passion, repeated in every Mass, and even if such an act occurred, it would not be the oblation by which the Mass is said to be a sacrifice, for the sacrificial oblation of the Mass is only that precise and individual act of oblation, once and for ever done by Christ on the Cross and repeated only "in esse objectivo et vicariali" in the oblation of the sacramental separation of His Body and Blood on the altar. Likewise, the very action of Christ which performs the consecration with the priest and through the priest, and consequently offers with him this sacramental separation, is impertinent or material to the formal sacrificial oblation of the Mass. In the pure and formal line of sacrifice, all is performed in the higher and mysterious level of representation and of direct unity with the sacrifice of the Cross. While the human minister performs, as instrument of Christ, the sacramental immolation or separation of the sacred Body and Blood and offers it, Christ Himself, as the Eternal Priest of His own sacrifice on the Cross, takes over, so to speak, in that double action, devoid of proper sacrificial power, and fills it, in the order of representation, with the whole reality of His own sacrifice, that is with the immolation and oblation physically performed on the Cross, once and for ever.

This is what Christ intended to signify in that single and masterly expression: "Hoc facite in meam commemorationem"; this is what all Tradition summarized in its constant and emphatic assertion that the Mass is a representation, nay a repetition, of the sacrifice of the Cross; this is what every consistent theologian should logically infer from his own principle, so commonly and innocently repeated, that the Mass is a sacrifice essentially representative of the sacrifice of the Cross.

8. Our explanation has been, after all, only a theological circumlocution of the essence of the sacrifice of the Mass. We can

⁶³ St. John Chrysostom, *In Io. hom.* 86. 4 (quoted by Pius XII in the Encyclical "Mediator Dei"). See below, p. 77.

never solve or properly explain the mystery, for, the Eucharist is fully a mystery, the "Mysterium Fidei" par excellence, not only as a sacrament, but also as a sacrifice. It is rather one double edged mystery: Sacrificial Sacrament and Sacramental Sacrifice. All we can say of such sacrifice is that it is really and fully a Sacrament of the Cross, the "Sacramentum Memoriae," as described by St. Augustin.

V

Recently, on November 20, 1947, Pius XII issued his Encyclical "*Mediator Dei*," the first papal document of this kind on the Sacred Liturgy. It contains the following passages concerning the nature of the Eucharistic sacrifice:

The august Sacrifice of the altar, then, is no mere empty commemoration of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, but a true and proper act of sacrifice, whereby the High Priest by an unbloody immolation offers Himself a most acceptable Victim to the Eternal Father, as He did upon the Cross. "It is one and the same Victim; the same Person now offers it by the ministry of His Priests, Who then offered Himself on the Cross, the manner of offering alone being different" [Council of Trent]. The Priest is the same, Jesus Christ, whose sacred Person His minister represents. Now the minister by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has received, is made like to the High Priest and possesses the power of performing actions in virtue of Christ's very Person. Wherefore in his priestly activity he in a certain manner "lends his tongue, and gives his hand" [St. John Chrysostom] to Christ. Likewise the Victim is the same, namely our Divine Redeemer in His human nature with His true Body and Blood. The manner, however, in which Christ is offered is different. On the Cross He completely offered Himself and all His sufferings to God, and the immolation of the Victim was brought about by the bloody death, which He underwent of His free will. But on the altar, by reason of the glorified state of His human nature, "death shall have no more dominion over Him," and so the shedding of His Blood is impossible; still according to the plan of Divine Wisdom, the sacrifice of our Redeemer is shown forth in an admirable manner by external signs which are symbols of His death. For by the "transubstantiation" of bread into the Body of Christ and of wine into His Blood, His Body and Blood are both really present: now the Eucharistic species under which He is present,

symbolize the actual separation of His Body and Blood. Thus the commemorative representation of His death, which actually took place on Calvary, is repeated in every sacrifice of the altar, seeing that Jesus Christ is symbolically shown by separate symbols to be in a state of victimhood. . . . The unbloody immolation at the words of consecration, when Christ is made present upon the altar in the state of a victim, is performed by the priest and by him alone, as the representative of Christ and not as the representative of the faithful. . . . It cannot be over emphasized that the Eucharistic Sacrifice of its very nature, is the unbloody immolation of the Divine Victim, which is made manifest in a mystical manner by the separation of the Sacred Species and by their oblation to the Eternal Father. . . . Since His bitter sufferings constitute the principal mystery of our Redemption it is only fitting that the Catholic faith should give it the greatest prominence. This mystery is the very center of divine worship since the Mass represents and renews it every day and since all the Sacraments are most closely united with the Cross.⁶⁴

Several theologians, in various periodicals and manuals, have underscored the importance of this document, with reference to the present question, and tried to find in it at least an indirect confirmation of their own theories of sacramental immolation, understood either in the sense of the opinion commonly called of "sacramental immolation" (held by Billot and numerous other modern authors),⁶⁵ or in the sense of the distinct opinion of representative sacrifice (held by Casel, Vonier, Masure, etc.),⁶⁶ or in a generic sense common to both, in opposition to the opinions of physical immola-

⁶⁴ *Mediator Dei. Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Pius XII on the Sacred Liturgy* (Vatican Library Translation; N.C.W.C., Washington, D. C., 1948) 27 f., 35, 41 f., 56 f. The original Latin text is found in *AAS* 39 (1947) 548 f., 555, 563, 580.

⁶⁵ Cf. P. U. Thiesen, "O conceito de sacrificio segundo a 'Mediator Dei,'" *Revista Ecclesiastica Brasileira* 11 (1951) 132; Patres S. J. in Hispania professores, *Sacrae Theologiae summa* IV (Matriti, 1951) 337 f.

⁶⁶ As some were claiming that the Encyclical had harmonized its teaching with the particular doctrine of Casel ("doctrina mysteriorum"), Cardinal Marchetti Selvaggiani, Secretary of the Holy Office, in a letter to A. Rohrbacher, Archbishop of Salzburg, Nov. 25, 1948, denied such interpretation. Cf. *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 63 (1949) 226.

tion (Suarez, Lugo), of virtual immolation (Lessius, Gonet), and *a fortiori* of mere oblation (Lepin and partially De la Taille).

A careful analysis of the above quoted passages shows the following points: 1. As regards the substance of the doctrine, the Encyclical does not go beyond what was proposed by the Council of Trent; the same four notes given by the Council (see above, p. 58), are repeated by the Encyclical. Therefore, none of all the above mentioned opinions is directly affected or confirmed, and the controversy remains essentially as it was before the Encyclical.⁶⁷ 2. Nevertheless, the Encyclical borrows from the general theory of sacramental immolation some of its common expressions, as: "The sacrifice is shown forth by external signs which are symbols of His death," "Symbolically shown by separate symbols to be in a state of victimhood," "the unbloody immolation is made manifest in a mystical manner by the separation of the Sacred Species." In this sense the Encyclical takes a step farther than the Council of Trent (which had used the more sober and generic expressions "Oblation under the species of bread and wine," "Oblation under the symbols of those same things," "Immolation under visible signs") toward that general theory, and in such a direct confirmation of the terminology, one may perhaps read an indirect confirmation of the theory itself and a consequent disregard for the other theories. 3. However, neither of the two opinions, which divide that general theory, i. e., the specific sacramental immolation held by Billot and the representative immolation we hold with Casel, Vonier and Masure, can claim any specific, even though indirect, confirmation from those expressions, which, far from supposing that the sacrifice consists in the sacramental separation of the species, as Billot seems to teach, imply rather that such separation is only the sign of an underlying unbloody immolation;⁶⁸ moreover the last part of the first passage of the Encyclical is all concerned with the representation of the sacrifice of the Cross, as the essential character of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Since all the other theories are either dead or in a state of progressive decay, only the last two opinions can hope for a promising

⁶⁷ Cf. Masure, *Le sacrifice du Corps Mystique* (Paris [1949]) 31.

⁶⁸ Cf. Masure, *Ibid.*, 12 f.

future; they actually divide the field of modern theology with lines of increasing separation and opposition: sacramental immolation, taken as an immolation distinct from that of the Cross, or sacramental immolation, taken as a representation of the Cross which formally unifies the two sacrifices. The former and older opinion apparently continues to rally the commoner suffrage of the professional theologians. "But for how much longer?" rightly asks Masure. "For, after all, the second opinion is in closer conformity with that article of faith, according to which the sacrifice of the Mass is the same as the sacrifice of the Cross, because there is only one sacrifice, one victim, one priest, one Body of Christ. It is also in closer harmony with the language of the Missal in its Secrets, Canon and Postcommunions. Besides, how much more easily does it not prepare, for the future, the union with our separated brothers in the one Church. At any rate, the historian of theological opinions notices that this position is steadily gaining ground by successive daily progress."⁶⁹ It remains to be seen which of the two opinions will prevail.

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DIGEST OF THE DISCUSSION

Father Connell, C.S.S.R. asked how Father Doronzo would explain that his theory does not make the Sacrifice of the Mass a *nuda commemoratio*. Father Doronzo answered that the Mass is a representation of the Cross, that the action is a sacrificial action, standing for the sacrificial action of the Cross.

Father Vollert, S.J. asked whether the Mass as an action, independently of the presence of worshipers and even of the advertence of the priest, is an image of the Cross. When Father Doronzo replied in the affirmative, Father Vollert inquired whether it is an action which is an image of another action (Calvary). In answering this Father Doronzo brought out that the consecration, as an action, is an image of the action of Calvary.

Father Palmer, S.J. inquired about the relative roles of immo-

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 31 f.

latio and oblatio in the theory of Father Doronzo. After remarking that both oblatio and immolatio are necessary in every sacrifice, and therefore in the Sacrifice of the Mass, Father Doronzo stressed the necessity of inquiring how the Mass is an immolation or destruction besides being an oblation.

Father Sheridan, S.J. wanted to know whether the Mass would still be a true sacrifice if there were no real presence. Father Doronzo stated that it would not because Christ is the victim. This necessitates a sacrificial action exercised on the Body of Christ.

Father Owens, C.S.S.R. requested greater clarification and precision in the use of the term "intentional order" in so far as the intentional order can be physical moral or cognitive. In the answer it was brought out that the intentional order does not imply only the cognitive order, but extends itself to all that it implies, namely, relation, movement, tendency, finality. In a word it is the order of tendency or mediation or vicariality. After pointing out that the very essence of knowledge and that the very essence of a Divine Person belongs to this order in so far as it is nothing else but a tendency or relation to another, Father Doronzo declared that it is not something (ens) but to something (ad ens).

Father Moholy, O.F.M. asked why there was so much stress on the actio occisive in the Mass. Father Doronzo replied that this was necessary in so far as it was the voluntary self destruction of Christ.

Recalling that the Fathers speak of the sacrifice of Isaac and Abraham, Father Bierberg, C.P.P.S. asked if there was ever a sacrifice without immolation. Father Doronzo answered in the negative and went on to say that the example mentioned did not constitute a sacrifice because there was no immolation. It was only an act of obedience entailing the willingness to immolate, if that were necessary.

Father Sullivan, S.J. inquired about the identity of the representation and the thing represented and asked whether the identity of the immolation of the Mass with that of the Cross is necessary to make the Mass a true sacrifice. Father Doronzo said that it was because the Mass is one sacrifice with the sacrifice of the Cross. He went on to say that if we had distinct immolations we would

have distinct sacrifices and then we would have two sacrifices in the New Law.

Father Brosseau asked for greater clarification as to how the sacrifice of the Mass is a sign of the sacrifice of the Cross. After pointing out that it is not only a sign but also a representation, Father Doronzo went on to speak of the importance of the *ordo intentionalis*.

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