

PROCLAIMING THE DEATH OF THE LORD

The Christian's Incarnational-Transcendental Approach Towards the World

To know God—and that knowledge, according to St. John's gospel, is eternal life—a Christian must look for God where He is present. Man has no other choice than to seek God along that path whereon God is coming to him.

The Scriptures portray God coming to man in earthly wrappings and absorbed in historical movements. This statement does not teach pantheism but Providence. It repeats the thought of Ps 138(139);

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I sink to the nether world, you are present there.
If I take the wings of the dawn,
if I settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
Even there your hand shall guide me. . . (Ps 138:7-10).

Isaia recognized God, incarnated in the brutal power of Assyria; in the preaching of this same prophet, God called Assyria: "My rod in anger, my staff in wrath" (Is 10:5). When Habacuc questioned how God could be present in the wicked Babylonian invaders, God simply replied: "The just man lives by faith" (Hab 2:4). The incarnational presence of God is a mystery of faith; often enough God is camouflaged in strange garments yet exerting a redemptive, supernatural power.

Man would often prefer that God take a more transcendent approach, coming to him in the wondrous establishment of a world empire or else in the mystic experience of elevated contemplation. Such was the Messiah demanded by the Sadducees and Pharisees, and when God came to them incarnate in flesh, suffering and dying, they shouted "Blasphemy!" They had forgotten the message of the theophany granted the prophet Elias: God was present neither in the mighty wind nor in the earthquake nor in the fire. Only at

the "sound of gentle stillness" did Elias wrap his face in his mantle before the God of Israel (3 Kgs 19:11-13). God came, silenced and incarnated beneath the weight of human earthliness.

Because God takes the incarnational approach towards man, man must seek God in the same way. Faith, as the prophet Habacuc advised, is *man's* incarnational approach towards God, for by faith man sees beneath the surface of human events and adores the presence of God.

God's incarnation in human affairs embroils world history in a travail of tension and agony. From within, God is impelling the world to develop into something beyond itself, to reach a fulfillment exceeding its native capacity and even its highest desire (*cf.* Eph 3:19; 1 Jn 3:20). God's incarnational approach, we may say, incites a transcendental agony at the heart of existence. God within the world, like Jesus walking among men, seeks to lift the world of man beyond its capacity and dreams, and this initial uneasiness is triggered into struggle and hostility by the world corruption of original sin. That which must be transformed has been contaminated at its heart. As struggle unto death has broken out between God and the powers of darkness, "world," "earth," and "flesh" have become biblical synonyms for weakness, hate and rebellion.

Each time that God and the soul meet in the union of faith, the transcendental agony begins all over again for that soul. The Christian, through the presence of Jesus Christ, is transcending and transforming his sinful flesh; his *sarx harmatias* is evolving into the risen body of Christ, the *soma tou Christou*. The Christian stays at the front line of a titanic messianic struggle whose outcome transcends human powers of goodness or evil. He will become either a beast of the earth (*cf.* Apoc 13:11) or a son of God. Even though the incarnational approach must remain the point of departure, the Christian springs at once into a transcendental battle: "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thes 2:7) opposing the mystery of the Word of God made flesh.

This article sets out to unravel some elements of the mystery of the Christian facing the world. Our way of development is to determine more exactly from the Scriptures *how* God is incarnate within

the world and by His presence precipitates an agonizing struggle of transformation. From what God has done, man learns what he must do in order to find God.

The term *incarnational* is here accepted in the *wide* meaning of God's presence and activity in and through creatures. The Word-made-flesh is but the climax of a long, incarnational approach.

First examining the Pauline theology of creation, we will see that God made the world in such a way that at its heart there always pulsed a drive towards renewal and re-establishment in Jesus Christ. The most important element of this world, of course, is mankind, the center of God's incarnational presence and transcendental purpose. Created to the image and likeness of God, man was always seeking the fulfillment of this ideal—to be like God. Our second area of investigation will be the liturgy, for the liturgy dramatizes the most intense moment of this confrontation of God, man and the world. Lastly, we will examine the liturgical implications of this struggle for understanding the expiatory sacrifices of the Old Testament and the sacrifice of the Mass.

I. "CREATED THROUGH AND UNTO HIM"

According to the Scriptures, God began His incarnational approach at the moment of creation, and He has never deviated from it. Once He had created the universe, He was continually within it, sustaining it, healing it, transforming it. Even the work of creation, as described in chapter one of Genesis, came about, not so much by God's issuing orders from majestic heights but rather by His placing the seed of His word within a growing, evolving mass of matter. "And God *said*: 'Let there be light . . . firmament . . . earth.'" This word of creation, like every word, flows from the deep center of God's mind and reveals His secret thoughts. It reached its fullest expression in man and woman, for there is could be received into another heart and mind to be cherished and obeyed. To create them to His own image, God—so we read in chapter two of Genesis—breathed His own divine life into them. The imaging of God, therefore, began from within and gradually diffused itself outward across the surface of human activity. So intimate was

God's incarnational presence that God and man communed and intuited one another's thoughts.¹ God thereby elevated man and his world to undeserved heights of knowledge, love and loyalty.

From the very start of all things, God placed within creation a faint resemblance of Himself, a feeble stirring of His own life. Creation could never afterwards be at rest. It felt an impulsion to reflect its Maker perfectly, to reunite its scattered remembrances of Him into one resplendent Image. This unrest of world existence would have remained like the scintillating buoyancy of youth, exhilarating in strenuous exercise, relaxing after expended effort, and beginning once more like the giant sun joyfully to run its course (Ps 18:6).

Sin, however, struck at the heart of the first man and woman, invading that deep, personal area where divine life had taken up its abode. Ever afterwards the woman and her offspring struggled with the serpent and his offspring (Gen 3:15). The forces of darkness would strive with more than human strength to corrupt man's divine life into a proud revolt to be "like God, knowing [and controlling] good and evil" (Gen 3:5). Man, for his part, was involved by his own guilt in a titanic struggle; he desperately needed clear direction and extraordinary strength in order to keep to the path of God's approach towards him.

The Old Testament called this divine assistance "Wisdom." "Wisdom" was not distinct from that loving, directing power of God, first manifested at creation. Wisdom, according to Proverbs:

. . . was poured forth,
 at the first, before the earth. . . .
 When he established the heavens [Wisdom sings] I was there,
 when he marked out the vault over the face of the deep. . . .
 Then was I beside him as his craftsman (Prov 8:23-30).

Because of sin, however, wisdom took the form of discipline and law, coercing, encouraging, reasoning, punishing, rewarding.

Wisdom pronounced the innumerable maxims and prescriptions

¹ Cf. R. A. F. MacKenzie, "Divine Soliloquies in Genesis," *CBQ* 17 (April 1955) 277-286.

in the Book of Proverbs. These laws not only came from God but also revealed His presence. Through them, as W. D. Davies rightly observes,² a process of redemptive activity was in progress.

He who finds me finds life, . . . [Wisdom announces]
all who hate me love death (Prov 8:35).

Sirach carried this theme of "wisdom . . . creation . . . redemption" one step further. He imparted a distinctly Israelite tone to divine wisdom by identifying its laws with the *Torah*. He wrote this personification of Wisdom:

From the mouth of the Most High I came forth
and mistlike covered the earth.³
In the highest heaven did I dwell,
my throne on a pillar of cloud.⁴
In the holy Tent I ministered before him,
and in Zion I fixed my abode . . .
in Jerusalem is my domain.⁵
All this is true of the book of the Most High's covenant,
the Law which Moses commanded us⁶
(Sir 24:3-4, 10-11, 22).

The creation of the universe, then, was the first step towards the erection of the Jerusalem temple. History was always moving forward towards the day when the temple liturgy would be solemnly enacted and the priestly instructions clearly proposed. This steady progress resulted from the incarnational presence of God at the heart of world existence.

² Cf. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* ed. 2 (London: SPCK, 1958) 168. A correct application or adequate understanding of Gen 1:1ff includes the notion of "redemption." Belonging to the Priestly tradition of the Pentateuch, chapter one of Genesis is not only a hymn celebrating God's first creative act of the universe but also an act of faith proclaiming God's final creative act of eschatological glory. By obedience the people of God already inaugurate the *eschaton*. This thesis is elaborated in "The Theology of Creation in Second Isaias," *CBQ* 21 (October 1959) 429-467 and more popularly in "Genesis," *Jubilee* 10 (1963) 16-20 and in "Genesis and the secret of Creation," *The Bible Today* 1 (1962) 7-12.

³ Creation. cf. Gen 1:2.

⁴ The exodus out of Egypt. cf. Ex 13:21-22; 14:19.

⁵ The temple liturgy. cf. 3 Kgs 8.

⁶ The Torah.

The Rabbis further developed this notion; we are told in their literature that the Torah was older than the world and instrumental in creating it. "The world," declared Rabbi Udan, "was created for the sake of the Torah."⁷ The Torah so controlled the work of creation that it actually lived within the created world. It represented the "incarnate" presence of God. It pulsed as a divine élan within the universe, continually striving for the complete expression of itself. The Torah was the masterful Word of God, creating, sustaining, perfecting and achieving. After the world struggle of the Messianic era, the Torah would be fully observed and then, as it were, re-absorbed into God in the everlasting "age to come."⁸

Both the Old Testament and the Rabbinical traditions portrayed God almost incarnate in the world, in order to elevate the world to divine, transcendent glory. The New Testament, for its part, erases that word "almost" and announces that the Word of God has *actually* become flesh to dwell in our midst. With the arrival of the fulness of time, "God sent his son, born of a woman" (Gal 4:4), so thoroughly incarnate as to appear "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3). St. Paul wrote the earliest theology of redemption, an approach quite different from St. John's.⁹ The Apostle of the Gentiles overlooked the historical aspects of Jesus' ministry, and from the revelation of the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus, his thought slowly moved back to that eternal moment before time when God was on the verge of saying: "Let there be light . . . firmament . . . earth" (Gen 1). Skilled in the scriptures and trained by the rabbis, St. Paul presented the incarnate approach of Jesus Christ against a background of Wisdom, Torah, Creation and Redemption.

⁷ Quoted by Davies, *op. cit.*, 170-1.

⁸ In an earlier work *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to come* (Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, Vol VII; Philadelphia, Pa., 1952), W. D. Davies demonstrates from early rabbinical traditions that the Jews of Our Lord's day distinguished between the Messianic Age (when the divine promises would be fulfilled) and the age to come (when the full joy of divine redemption would be experienced).

⁹ St. John's thought, however, may be closer to St. Paul's than is usually supposed. His method of paralleling the first part of his gospel upon the seven days of creation may imply a "theology of creation" similar to St. Paul's in Colossians and Ephesians.

The full theological synthesis of the apostle's thought emerged, as we would expect, only in his later, mature years. By that time Paul had passed beyond the early stage reflected in *Thessalonians* where the imminent parousia of the Risen Lord absorbed his attention. He had left behind the larger but still limited concern of *Corinthians*, *Galatians* and *Romans*. In those, his "Great Epistles," the vision of the mystery of Christ had expanded to include not only the future Day of the Lord but also the Christian's *present* sharing in Christ's risen life. But even this vision did not match his definitive achievement in *Colossians* and *Ephesians*. In these two last epistles Paul's interest swept from eternity to eternity. It moved back to the moment "before the foundation of the world" and from that point swung forward to "the recapitulation of all things in Christ" where all "appear with Him in glory" (Eph 1:10; Col 3:4). In this, his final statement, St. Paul sees the beginning of the incarnate approach of the Son of God not with His birth at Bethlehem but with the initial act of creation.¹⁰

Somewhat abruptly in chapter one of Colossians, St. Paul inserts an early Christian hymn.¹¹ It praises God:

who has rescued us from the power of darkness
and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption, the remission of our sins.

This liturgical song accumulates reasons why redemption in Christ Jesus evokes wonder and praise. Jesus who redeemed us by His death-resurrection is acclaimed:

image of the invisible God
firstborn before all creatures

¹⁰ The gradual development of St. Paul's theology against the background of his apostolate and sufferings has been recently presented by Barnabas M. Ahern, "Fellowship of his sufferings," *CBQ* 22 (1960) 1-32, and in book form by David M. Stanley, *Christ's Resurrection in Pauline Soteriology*. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1961.

¹¹ Stanley, *op. cit.*, 203, writes: "Most modern commentators agree that vv. 15-20 [of Col 1] originally formed part of a liturgical hymn, although they divide the strophes in various ways." He mentions the names of A. Masson, J. Weiss, A. Deissmann, E. Norden, M. Dibelius, E. Loymeyer, E. Stauffer, E. Percy, J. Héring, P. Benoit, L. Cerfaux, E. Käsemann.

in [or, by] whom all things have been created
 through and unto him all things stand created
 the head of his body the Church
 the firstborn from among the dead
 alone supreme in all things (Col 1:15-18).

The redemptive work of Jesus Christ is like the wide span of a circle. It began, according to this hymn, in the silent majesty and transcendent glory of the invisible Godhead. Jesus Christ was the resplendent image or *eikōn* of the divine. In this glorious reflection St. Paul contemplates God the Redeemer. This eternal "Christ," in St. Paul's theology, overflows into the universe.

The glory of God shines from the bosom of the Trinity, wondrously and perfectly imaged in the Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and through Him refracted into the creatures of the universe. Thus it happens that "all things in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible . . . stand created through and unto him"—*ta panta di' autou kai eis auton ektistai*. St. Paul deliberately employs the *perfect* form of the Greek verb, denoting an action *already achieved* in its fulness, whose effects continue to be felt. *ektistai*, therefore, is best translated: all things *stand created*. *di' autou*, instead of the preposition *ek*, stresses instrumentality; Christ is the mediator or the workman through whom Almighty God creates and continues the work of creating.¹² Lightfoot translated this phrase: "As all creation passed out from him, so does it all converge again towards him."¹³ St. Paul uses another perfect tense of the

¹² It may seem impossible that Christ *qua* man performed an active role in creation. Yet, as Bonsirven has written, commenting on this passage: ". . . nous constatons qu'il s'agit de l'Homme-Dieu, en qui habite la plénitude de la Divinité, qui est la tête de l'Église, premier-né d'entre les morts. Il n'y a pas lieu de penser que S. Paul, dans ces phrases étroitement enchaînées, change de sujet, passant du Verbe au Verbe Incarné: il a toujours en vue le même Jésus-Christ." *L'Évangile de Paul* (Paris: Mouton, 1948) 86. Rather than change the necessary consistent meaning of revelation to what we consider the demands of reason, we must expend greater effort at investigation and thus hope to come to a deeper appreciation of the *mystery*. As in Gen 1, likewise here the scriptures are dealing with the *mysterious, redemptive* involvements of creation.

¹³ L. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* ed. 5 (London: Macmillan, 1880) 154.

verb in the following verse: *kai ta panta en autō sunestēken*. "The universe owes its coherence to him."¹⁴

It is very difficult to explain *how* Jesus exercised a "mediatorial function . . . in creation."¹⁵ St. Paul's language here is liturgical and poetical. Poetry, however, does not destroy the reality in Paul's words; it simply attests that strictly rational categories of thought cannot contain nor communicate the full truth. The poet like the mystic judges intuitively and speaks symbolically.¹⁶ With liturgical language Paul sweeps away the barriers of past and future,¹⁷ in order to involve the worshipper in a divine redemptive act *now* taking place. The Christological hymn, quoted by St. Paul, quickly moves from first creation to the death of Jesus and even beyond Calvary to the final re-creation; from Christ, the Alpha, to Christ, the omega; from the beginning, to the end.

Some kind of efficient and exemplary causality seems to be attributed to Christ. Bonsirven, however, hastens to add: "difficilement . . . en tant que tel."¹⁸ Huby further qualifies these philosophical attempts to explain St. Paul's words: "We interpret *en autō* in v 16 in the same way as in v 17: in him all things have been created as in their supreme center of unity, harmony and cohesion; he gives to the world its sense, its value and therefore its reality; or, to use another metaphor, he is, as it were, the foyer, the meeting-point (Lightfoot), where all the threads of the universe and all its generative powers meet and coordinate. Whoever has an instantaneous point of view on the whole universe, past, present and future, sees all beings suspended ontologically in Christ, definitively intelligible only in him."¹⁹

¹⁴ C. F. D. Moule, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Cambridge: University Press, 1957) 67.

¹⁵ Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, 155. In this phrase Lightfoot attributes the power to "the Word in the Father," but St. Paul is speaking of the Word incarnate, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁶ The theologian, likewise, becomes something of a poet when he qualifies his statements about God with some such formula as "analogously" or "by the communication of idiom."

¹⁷ Cf. "Sacred Language breaks Time Barrier," *Worship* 36 (Feb. 1962) 163-7.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, 88.

¹⁹ J. Huby, *Saint Paul Les Épîtres de la Captivité*. Verbum Salutis VIII, ed. 4 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1935) 40.

When St. Paul calls Christ "the image [*eikōn*] of the invisible God," he places Our Lord prior to Adam and all other men. Christ *is* the image; all others are made *according* to that image. God expresses Himself in this one, perfect reflection, Jesus Christ. Through this image God's reflection spreads wide, like the colors of the spectrum, in an act of creation. What was fully in Christ, through Christ is divided and shared with the trillion parts of the universe.

Paul repeats this idea when he refers to Christ as "the firstborn [*prōtotokos*] before every creature." It is clear from this phrase that Christ is *not a part*, not even the first part of creation,²⁰ but He certainly is the one by whom and according to whom the universe begins its existence. It would be a long, tedious discussion to give all supporting texts, but there is a direct line of thought, connecting Paul's phrase *prōtotokos pasēs tkiseōs*—*the firstborn before every creature*—of Colossians with Proverbs 8:22, "The Lord begot me, the *firstborn* of his ways," and through Proverbs back to Genesis: "In the *beginning* God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1).²¹

The Hebrew word in Proverbs, translated "firstborn," is identical with Genesis' "In the *beginning*." With the help of Proverbs the Rabbis concluded that wisdom or the Torah was the firstborn of all creatures, and they then interpreted Genesis to mean, "*According to the Torah* God created the heavens and the earth." In creating, God scattered the reflective brilliance of the Torah throughout the universe, and, therefore, through obedience to this Torah, the universe will reach its final, perfect stage. The Torah was instrumental both in creating and in redeeming. The idea of "Redemption" must be included here in speaking of creation, because as creation continues, it is constantly overcoming many sinful obstacles. To the extent that the Torah wins obedience, the power of God's word achieves the full effect for which God sent it.²²

²⁰ St. Paul deliberately avoids Philo's expression *protogonos*.

²¹ Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 146-176, fully discusses this question under the chapter entitled, "The Old and the New Torah: Christ the Wisdom of God."

²² Further documentation of this position would have to consider the

Without trouble Paul could make the transition to Christ, the "Wisdom of God," the new Torah. Christ possesses all the fulness of the Godhead;^{22a} He is the perfect image of the Deity. He is the "mystery of God, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:2-3). All of these descriptive phrases must be understood dynamically, in the *active* way of God creating, God redeeming, God fulfilling, God glorifying. Such is Christ.

The Old Testament and especially its rabbinical interpreters came as closely as possible to making the law and the wisdom of God a divine person, one with God yet distinct from God in its emanation through the universe. St. Paul took that step, which, perhaps, was just a hair's breath away from the position of the Rabbis, but a hair's breath which flung him over the brink of a Niagara into the tumultuous mystery of Jesus Christ. He does not tire of calling Christ and His redemptive work "the mystery which has been hidden from eternity in God" (Eph 3:9).

Paul summed it up this way: "In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in him you have received of that fullness" (Col 2:9-10). This passage, as we are all aware, is a well-known, long discussed *crux interpretum*; it will necessarily remain so, because it lifts to the surface of human words three most sublime mysteries: the divinity of Christ, His work of redemption and our divine life of grace. As we remember not only Paul's rabbinical training but also the totally *existential* order of the biblical narrative, we conclude that for St. Paul Christ is divine because He *exercises* the fullness of God's redemptive power. *to plērōma* signifies Christ's divinity in the existential, rather than in the essential order, . . . the same sense as it has in the Johannine Prologue (cf. Jn 1:16).²³ "Of his fullness we have all received."

Colossian heresy with its strong Jewish element, attributing extraordinary powers to the angels in the creation and gubernation of the heavenly spheres and of the earth. Paul answers that "all things were created by him . . . in the heavens and on the earth, . . . whether Thrones or Dominations . . ." cf. Col 2:15.

^{22a} Cf. P. Benoit, "Corps, tête et plérôme dans les épîtres de la captivité," *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956) 5-44.

²³ Stanley, *op. cit.*, 206-7.

Books can and will be written on each Pauline statement. We will risk a conclusion whose purpose is not to settle all discussion but simply to indicate the consequences of one orthodox line of thought for our theme of the Christian's confrontation of the world.

When St. Paul contemplates the divine Christ, living "before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4), he sees the fullness of all divine activity, from that of God creating in the first moment of time all the way down to that of God re-creating in the eschatological moment. The universe comes into existence, not only God-stamped but truly Christ-stamped. God creates in Christ by extending the refulgence of Christ's being. What is scattered always seeks unity. Water, drawn from the ocean and scattered through the land, again seeks the ocean. Water will roar with fierce power against rocks and canyon walls which obstruct its path. Its energy mounts to an almost unlimited degree when it is locked behind colossal dams.

The image of Christ, spread across the universe, was always seeking the fullness from which it came forth. Once sin set up barriers, the image fought and battled to express itself adequately, and this struggle continued across the endless, continental stretch from "Adam who was the son of God" all the way to Jesus, the new Adam and the perfect Son of God.²⁴ In Jesus Christ dwelt²⁵ "the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Like water stored behind a mammoth dam, the full force of God stirred within the bodily frame of Christ Jesus, truly an infinite reservoir of energy.²⁶ This water of divinity poured into Christ and pounded against the walls of *flesh*. The full redemptive glory of the Godhead strove against the binding, restrictive, even hostile power of human *sarx*. It broke through in Christ's death-resurrection.

This death-resurrection was accompanied with the triumphant

²⁴ Many involvements of this statement are handled by C. K. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last. A Study in Pauline Theology* (London: Black, 1962). We call attention in this context to Luke's genealogy which is very Pauline in spirit.

²⁵ St. Paul uses the present tense *kat-oikei*, *dwells*, for he thinks of Christ only as He really is, in the fullness of His body, the Church.

²⁶ *energeia* is the Greek word employed for the redemptive power of God in Christ Jesus: Col 1:19; 2:12; Eph 1:19.

cry: *It is perfected! It is finished!*²⁷ And yet, as this fullness is received into the Church, the Mystical Christ, it is not yet perfected nor is it finished! We say this, not so much to correct the Sacred Scripture as to assist our inadequate understanding of the Scriptures. What happened in Christ is happening in the mystical Christ. The redemptive-creative work of God—what the Bible sometimes calls His “glory”²⁸—is over with, but one must linger while pronouncing these words, for the work is still passing over and through the Church. The Church is just as truly Christ, as the Christ who died and rose again. The Church, fully understood, is the real Christ now existing.

We face, therefore, a redemptive-creative work, fully accomplished and yet somehow still being accomplished; a redemptive incarnation which has totally transformed the human and lifted it to the transcendent glory of heaven and at the same time a redemptive incarnation still filling up “his body [that is, Christ’s body] which is the Church” (Col 1:24). These “good tidings of the unfathomable riches of Christ,” according to St. Paul, are “the mystery . . . hidden from eternity in God who created all things . . . now made known through the Church . . . [and thus] accomplished in Christ Jesus our *kurios*” (Eph 3:8-11).²⁹

²⁷ John 19:30 *tetelesthai*, a “perfect” tense verb, indicating a work fully achieved and viewed under the aspect of its activity continuing on in the present moment. C. Spicq, *Le Épitre aux Hébreux 2* (ed. 2; Paris; Gabalda, 1952) 39, links this Greek word with *teleioun*, Christ’s priestly cry in Heb 5:7-10.

²⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 2:8; John 17:5 and the footnotes in *La Sainte Bible . . . de Jérusalem* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1956). Also, M. Carrez, “Glory,” *A Companion to the Bible*, ed. J.-J. Allmen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958) 137-141; D. Mollat, “Gloire,” *Vocabulaire de Théologie Biblique* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1962) 412-9.

²⁹ Cf. Kathryn Sullivan, “The Mystery Revealed to Paul—Eph 3:1-13,” *The Bible Today* 1 (Feb. 1963) 252, who refers to Lucien Cerfaux, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959) 423, “Christ’s work will consist in restoring this primitive unity, in establishing once again what had been in the beginning. This new-found unity will be ecumenical (Jew and pagan again will be reunited), cosmic (the Powers will be stripped of their dominion over the cosmos and over men), and eschatological (the re-establishment of this unity will mark the birth of the new world). There is parallelism, but not equivalence, between the restored unity and the primordial

What has happened in Christ Jesus, therefore, had already existed, hidden in God before creation. Creation proceeds from God, one with the redemptive accomplishment of Christ Jesus, and what Jesus did, is *now* made known—that is, is now being done—through the Church.

God *always* proceeded along the incarnational approach, in order to lift the earth to transcendent glory. He is *now* approaching that way, and we can meet Him and be united with Him in glory only through the same way.

II. INCARNATIONAL APPROACH OF THE LITURGY

We have been investigating St. Paul's theological synthesis, especially as he formulated it in his epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians. The passages which attracted most attention seem to have originated in the liturgy of the apostolic church. The Old and the New Testament manifest many examples of inspired writers borrowing some well-known hymn or instruction from sanctuary service.³⁰ If there exists, then, such close ties between the Bible and the liturgy, a close study of ancient worship will not only deepen our knowledge of scripture but will also enable us to recognize the scriptural basis of salvation in our contemporary liturgy. What St. Paul drew from the Eucharistic worship of his day can be relocated in the Eucharistic celebration of our own day. The Eucharist will thus be seen as an *anamnēsis* or remembrance of God's incarnational approach towards man. Furthermore, man will better understand that the Eucharist consecrates his own involvement in earthly life as a path towards God. God and man meet "incarnationally" in the Eucharist, and in that encounter man rises to participate in God's *transcendent* life.

Our examination of the Old Testament liturgy can be restricted to the feast of the Paschal Lamb; during its celebration Jesus instituted the Eucharist. The Pasch, furthermore, beautifully embodies

unity, for the primordial unity belongs to the old world and came from Christ who created it. The second unity belongs to the new and definitive world and comes from the risen Christ who is our Savior."

³⁰ "The Interdependence of the Old Testament Liturgy and the Bible," *The Church Year* (The Liturgical Conference, 1959) 139-155.

the "incarnational" approach of God.³¹ The feast began in thoroughly human circumstances and in its later history continually absorbed new details of Israel's very human existence. At times, the events appeared so insignificant, even so unworthy of God, that long prayer and strong faith alone could see beneath such a taudy surface and detect God's redemptive presence.

The Pasch began with the exodus out of Egypt. It is difficult to say what this occurrence meant to the Egyptian people. They probably attached very little importance to it; they did not even judge it important enough for their official records. The exodus made little or no dent upon the Egyptian economy, in no way does it seem to have injured the morale of Pharaoh's soldiers, and it assuredly did not topple the reigning dynasty. Even for the Israelites involved in the first exodus, the event seemed a hectic combination of fear, panic, silence, stealth, grumbling and despair (Ex 14:10-14). Only when the waters closed in to separate them from their Egyptian pursuers, did the Israelites sing triumphantly to God their Savior (Ex 15:19-21), but almost immediately they began grumbling all over again (Ex 15:24; 16:3).³²

In and through all this humanness God was performing one of His mightiest redemptive acts. Time and prayer were necessary, however, before the people of God grasped the inner reality of this event. The exodus gradually became the elaborate festival of the Paschal lamb; a ritual by which the people sought to express externally the divine meaning of the first saving act of God. The human imperfections and sins of the Mosaic days were forgotten and the redemptive act of God was lifted to the surface. Without the liturgy the exodus would probably have been forgotten and its details erased from memory in the same way that Egyptian sands and winds have worn down and silenced other, seemingly greater events of history. What we want to stress here, however, is the

³¹ The history of the paschal liturgy was treated in "Old Testament Liturgy and College Theology," *Proceedings of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine* 6 (1960) 60-82.

³² A comparison of Deut with Ex-Num reveals notable differences. Deut, much more liturgical, moves with a more exultant, idealistic tone.

obvious fact: Israelite liturgy would have remained silent and meaningless had it not reached out to re-enact the deeds of salvation-history. Its very life was the continuing existence of what God once performed at a given moment of time. The liturgy does not commemorate and renew the achievements of scholars, not even the definitions of Church Fathers, but the redemptive acts performed by God in human history.

We detect at once the incarnational approach of God to man and of man to God. The liturgy reaches within a human event, discards the surface elements of politics, selfishness and short-sightedness and lifts to popular vision the transcendental presence of God. Thus the people of God are enabled to adore God their Savior and to re-experience the salvation event. The liturgy of this later age at once proceeds to clothe this divine act of salvation with the human wrappings of contemporary civilization. After the Israelites, for instance, had conquered Palestine and settled down in their new homeland, the exodus liturgy was modified. It had begun as a vigil of fear and silence; it continued during the desert days as a nomadic festival of freedom. Joyful features slowly appeared in the liturgy; the worshippers began to recline peacefully. No longer did they eat standing "like those who are in flight" (Ex 12:11). In Palestine they added the ritual of unleavened bread to thank God for the yearly deliverance from hunger at this Spring harvest festival. Deliverance from oppression was no longer a throwing off of Egyptian chains but an emergence from the threat of famine.

Centuries later during the Babylonian exile, when they were again oppressed in a foreign land, the paschal liturgy expressed their faith in a new exodus. They will proceed across a desert where springs will flow marvelously with water and where the entire route will be a way prepared by the Lord (Is 40:3; 43:16-21). The incarnational aspect of God's approach will not stop here but continue on, always assimilating new elements of Israelite daily life till the fullness of time comes. At that moment the paschal meal would absorb and thereby be transformed by the bread, wine and lamb of the new covenant. The liturgy—and here we express our purpose up till now—reflects the daily life of the people and, in fact, *is* that

life in its deepest reality, for it repeats ever anew the historical meeting of God and His people.³³

The liturgy, like human life, changes on its surface; but at its heart it remains the same. In the case of the Pasch, the liturgy renewed the great mystery of the exodus, the passage of God's people from sin to grace, from oppression to freedom. We have scanned the continuity and simultaneity of the Pasch from the days of Moses till the time of Christ. The Pasch, therefore, is not so much a line which extends through the ages but a point around which the ages revolve. This point, deeply incarnated in all history, remains the same, for it is the transcendent God acting and redeeming; but this presence of God led to various changes on the surface of history, like the new barley harvest, the return from Babylonian captivity and eventually the Passion-resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Not only did future events revolve around this point, ancient events as well. We will stay with the example of the Paschal liturgy. The Priestly tradition of the Pentateuch sees a long preparation for the moment of the exodus, a preparation reaching back even beyond creation. The Priestly authors center all the earlier events around the Pasch by means of the phrase, "These are the generations . . .," in Hebrew, *'elleh toledōth*. . . . The creation of the universe, the long-lived patriarchs, the great flood, the migration of Jacob's household into Egypt—all of these events are designated *'elleh toledōth* and thereby linked immediately with the Pasch.³⁴

Each was a redemption from darkness, need or oppression, and therefore each in its own way was an exodus. Most important of all for our Christian understanding, the first act of creation was dynamically related to the Pasch-exodus event. It was a *redemptive* act of God, for as creation continued its work through the centuries, it struggled against darkness and sorrow. This aspect of *creation* in the Paschal mystery was to continue and reach its fullest expression in Christ, our Paschal Lamb. Christ, crucified and risen, was to die and through that death rise to new life; the Paschal celebration

³³ Cf. "Teaching the Sacraments from Scripture," *Perspectives* 5 (Sept-Oct 1960) 17ff.

³⁴ Albert Clamer, *Genèse* (Paris; Letouzey et Ané, 1953) 51.

of His death-resurrection re-enacts this mystery in the body of Christ, the Church, till all are re-created in eternal life. The incarnational approach of God involves the liturgy in changing history, till time and space are transformed into the transcendent glory of the eternal, new creation.³⁵

³⁵ Recent biblical scholarship provides new insight into several other important features of biblical liturgy, helping us to appreciate better the incarnation aspect of the divine within the human. We can now recognize a richer significance in such liturgical acts as the laying on of hands, the blood ritual and the burning of the oblation. Scholars like Stanislas Lyonnet, *Theologia Biblica Novi Testamenti, De Peccato et Redemptione* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1960) and Luigi Moraldi, *Espiazione Sacrificale* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1956) have thoroughly investigated and completely established the purpose and scope of these ritual acts; hence we stress only one aspect—the bond of union between the worshipper and his offering as well as the bond of union between the worshipper and his God.

Union is both the condition and the result of life, and liturgical symbolism was constantly striving to express these two realities of union and life. In the early Mosaic stage and for a long time in later development the Israelite liturgy relegated death and separation, the slaughtering of animals and expiatory sacrifices, to a very unimportant, almost paraliturgical position. In chapter one of Leviticus, for instance, the animal is not called a "victim" but a "holocaust offering" and a "sweet-smelling oblation." The killing of the animal was not liturgically important; it was done by a layman. Only afterwards did the priests proceed with the liturgical sacrifice.

Imposing hands never meant that the holocaust substituted for the offerer; instead, it strengthened the union between the two. What happened to the *oblata* externalized and intensified the spirit of the offerer. The worshipper would go up to God as the smoke ascended from the altar of holocaust.

Another example is the blood ritual. Blood sprinkled upon the altar or upon some other object representing God symbolized a flow of life and therefore at-one-ment between God and His subject. Leviticus crystalized this liturgical tradition in the statement: "Blood, as the seat of life, makes at-one-ment" (Lev 17:11). The Hebrew text could even be understood: "Blood, because it is life, makes at-one-ment." Not because it is sorrow or death but because it is the seat of life does blood unite God and man in one life. In order to appreciate the full significance of the blood ritual, our discussion should touch upon the biblical concept of life. We cannot delay over this problem—it is as deep as eternity and as baffling as the human psyche—but it is to our advantage right here to recall that life, in biblical terminology, was not split into many faculties or levels of operation. The physical was not considered apart from the intellectual, nor the natural apart from the supernatural. Man acted at each moment with the full vigor of his being; thought involved desire; physical joy emanated from spiritual grace. [cf. J. Pedersen, *Israel I-II* (Copenhagen: Branner Og Korch, 1924) 99-181, the section entitled "The Soul, its powers and capacity"] This total involvement of oneself would

For our purpose right now, we can conclude this second major section which investigated "the incarnational approach of the liturgy" by stating that the liturgy not only reflected the daily lives of the people of God but *was* that life in its deepest meaning. The liturgy received its initial exterior form and its abiding interior significance from the events of history. The liturgy sloughed off many accidental details of historical events, so that only the most important features were dramatized. In this pruning process it became clear that God was at the heart of history, saving and gladdening His people. "God at the heart" means God incarnate within His people so that through God's presence the people feel the beat of a divine mode of life. God was slowly enabling the world to transcend its greatest hopes and to evolve into a new Paradise.

III. TRANSFORMATION THROUGH EXPIATION

As God sends the blood of divine life through the body of Israel, many obstructions and hindrances are encountered. Sin has shrunk and clogged the life-arteries of the people. The body must first be healed before it can be transformed. This final section of our study, consequently, can be entitled: transformation through expiation.

Expiatory sacrifice is nothing other than a people's profound and contrite sense of sin rising to the surface of consciousness and expressing itself liturgically. Even though every individual person and nation begins life carrying the seed of sin deep within its soul, still, a long time elapses while that seed grows and thrusts its vicious power into the level of consciousness. Still more time must pass before conscience admits its guilt and repents. Everyone at first lives exuberantly and only later recognizes the weakness of flesh. This law of life is true of Israel and of the Church. The apostles, as the Book of Acts asserts, began their ministry, repeatedly announcing that they were witnesses of the resurrection. They touched

be most intensely realized at the moment of worship. God and man set up a bond of union, close and compact. True, both God and man remained distinct; the Bible does not propagate pantheism; but neither God nor man can be adequately and realistically understood apart from the other. The blood-ritual, therefore, professed a profound faith that man's life each moment comes from God and must flow back to God in love and adoration.

only quickly, almost apologetically upon the Passion and death of Our Lord. But as they courageously manifested the power of the Risen Savior in a world of flesh, all kinds of difficulties appeared within and without the community, and slowly they admitted the necessity of suffering with Christ in expiation of sin.

The same process is evident in Old Testament times. Israel began an independent national existence when she burst from the womb of the Red Sea and beheld the glorious theophany of Mount Sinai. For a long time afterwards—in fact, for longer than six hundred years—expiatory sacrifices and sin-offerings held little or no place in the Israelite ritual.³⁶ Serious offenses were punished—according to the southern tradition of Leviticus—with death or a form of excommunication. The northern practice is embodied in the Sichemite liturgy of covenant renewal.³⁷ In this latter ritual the levitical priests proclaimed great blessings and threatened dire curses but gave no attention to expiation for serious sin. It seems that the ceremonial included some type of public “confession of sin.” This formal begging of God’s forgiveness presumed that the worshipper was contrite, already freed of any hateful disposition towards God, and wholly intent on adoration.³⁸ True, Leviticus speaks often enough of “sin offerings”—the *'asham* and the *shegagah* of the Hebrew text—but the context clearly shows that these sacrifices were offered for unintentional faults and various “sins of inadvertence.”³⁹

Israel always recognized her desperate need for divine assistance. Without God she would have rotted in Egypt, dried up in the desert and starved amidst Palestinian famines. These, however, were the days of youth. Israel hoped and dreamed; great victories were taking place—the exodus, the covenant, the conquest, the establish-

³⁶ This absence may be due, at least in part, to a strong reaction against the superstitious, expiatory rites of neighboring people. Archeology has unearthed all kinds of rites for placating and controlling the anger of gods and goddesses.

³⁷ Deut 27-28.

³⁸ The only exceptions of which I am conscious are: Lev 5:20-26 (small acts of theft) and Lev 19:20-22 (“lesser” types of adultery). The full crime of adultery was punished by death (*cf.* 20:10; Jos 7:24-28).

³⁹ *Cf.* Lev 4-5.

ment of the Davidic dynasty. The liturgy like Israel's life rang with vibrant Alleluias.

The prophets Amos, Michea, Isaia, Sophonia, Jeremia and Ezechiel, cleared the way for the elaboration of expiatory sacrifices. "The day of the Lord," shouted Amos, was to be "a day of darkness" (Am. 5:18). Sophonia added dour words of lament: "A day of anguish and distress, a day of destruction and desolation" (Soph 1:15). Jeremia taught that God had first "to root up and to tear down, to destroy and to demolish" before He could be ready "to build and to plant" (Jer 1:10). Wondrously enough, God was in the midst of all this agony. He cries out in Osee's words: "My heart is overwhelmed, my pity is stirred" (Os 11:8). In one of the boldest passages of the entire Bible, God cries out through Deutero-Isaia:

You burdened me with your sins,
and wearied me with your crimes (Is 43:24).

The Hebrew phrase, "You burdened me"—*he'ebadtani*—literally means "you have made a servant of me." This phrase becomes even more startling, when we recall its close connection with Deutero-Isaia's theme of the Suffering Servant. God was somehow with His people, a servant with them as they experienced the humbling effects of sin. The four songs of the *'ebed Yahweh* reach the climax of humiliation and exaltation in chapter fifty-three. The servant is a lamb slain "for the sin of his people"; "he gives his life as an offering for sin."⁴⁰

The hymns of Deutero-Isaia and especially the Suffering Servant Songs may have been composed for liturgical assemblies in Babylon. Once more the liturgy voices the deep sorrow and re-enacts the tragic experience of the people. The painful groan of sorrow sounds within the syllables of another liturgical book, *Lamentations*, composed most probably in Palestine for services at the site of the devastated temple.

Adoration and joy continue to hold the dominant role in Israelite liturgy, but God has surrounded Himself with a new feature of human life—the expiatory sufferings of the wicked and especially

⁴⁰ Isaia uses the Hebrew word *'asham* translated "a sin of inadvertence in Lev.

of the innocent. Hereafter, expiatory sacrifices, fasting and other penitential rites were firmly fixed in the ritual. To be convinced of this, one has only to glance through the books of Zacharia, Nehemia and Joel. We, however, must proceed to New Testament times and determine the effects of the Old Testament liturgy upon our understanding of the mystery of Christ.⁴¹

Jesus thoroughly united Himself with a sinful world and most bitterly experienced the sin-consciousness of the human race. He was enfolded in the *sarx* of human weakness. "He has suffered," we read in the epistle to the Hebrews, "and has been tempted" (Heb 2:18). He underwent all our weakness and was as "one tried as we are in all things except sin" (Heb 4:16). So completely human did he appear that St. Paul wrote: "for our sakes he [God] made him into sin who knew nothing of sin" (2 Cor 5:21). "God, sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh—*sarkos harmatias*—as a sin offering, he condemned sin in the flesh—*en te sarki*" (Rom 8:3). According to Pauline theology, we can reword that last statement to read: Jesus condemned and overcame our sin by becoming incarnate in our flesh.

If Jesus had withdrawn to remote solitude, he never would have suffered in any way, much less died on the cross. But the law of the incarnation drove him to be thoroughly embroiled in the affairs of men, surrounded by their jealousy and hatred and finally overcome by their death. Jesus, of set purpose, struggled with the powers of darkness, so that his divine life might destroy them.

These two super-human forces—the Son of God and the offspring of the demon—locked in deadly combat. So close was the burning breath of sin upon Jesus that St. Paul pictures the struggle as a battle waged in the flesh of Jesus where sin was condemned. The more fierce the struggle, the more strenuously was the Spirit of God manifested in Jesus. His death was a mortal blow to *sarx* forever, and the triumphant Messiah rose from the dead, "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb 2:9). He who had become incarnate in flesh (*sarx*), destroyed *sarx*, that a new body, the *soma Christou*,

⁴¹ Cf. L. Sabourin, *Rédemption Sacrificielle Une Enquête Exégétique*. Desclée de Brouwer: 1961.

may emerge, transcending human possibilities in the divine life of the new, spiritual Adam.

Jesus is our Model and Master;⁴² He teaches the Christian how to face the world, how to become completely incarnate in the world so that through the apostolic Christian, alive in Christ Jesus, the world can transcend its present sinful condition and be "reconciled" to God (*cf.* Col 1:20). Only in Christ can the Christian accomplish this heroic feat. Of Himself, the Christian is part of world *sarx*. In Christ, the Christian becomes a new incarnation where the Spirit dwells; and as once in Jesus, so now the Spirit cries in each Christian, "Abba, Father!" (Gal 4:6).

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you," wrote St. Paul, "then he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also bring to life your mortal bodies. . ." (Rom 8:11). In that section of Romans just quoted, St. Paul hastens to add that "we are sons of God and joint heirs with Christ, provided, however, we suffer with him" (Rom 8:17). This suffering is most keenly felt, not so much by inflicting self-denial from without but by allowing the Spirit within to move outward and transform the rebellious *sarx* into the obedient *soma Christou*.

Nowhere does the body of Christ struggle so energetically against its weakness and sinfulness as in the Eucharist. There it proclaims the Passion and death of Jesus. It renews the moment of mortal combat between flesh and spirit in the death of Jesus. Once again as in Old Testament times, the life struggle of God's people is most intensely and most vitally experienced in the liturgy. We must look more closely at the Eucharistic text in First Corinthians (11:23-34). We cannot investigate every element of this highly important and very condensed passage. We can study only those features which relate directly to our present theme. By becoming incarnate in the world of *sarx* the Christian renews the sufferings of Christ, and through those sufferings enables the world to transcend itself to new glory in Christ Jesus. By clarifying this theme from First Corinthians, we may be able to cast light upon the nature of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

⁴² *Cf.* Matt 23:8-10.

In this Eucharistic text,⁴³ Paul writes that "as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). The same Greek word *kataggello*, here translated *proclaim*, occurs two chapters earlier in the verse: "The Lord directed that those who *preach* the gospel should have their living from the gospel" (1 Cor 9:14). We justifiably ask: how does the Eucharist *preach* the gospel? How does it witness to the world the death of the Lord?

St. Paul answers these questions in the following verse where he hints at his own, personal insight into "the body of the Lord." He complains that the Corinthians are eating the bread and drinking the cup unworthily, and in his own words here is why: they eat and drink "without distinguishing the body—*mē diakrinōn to sōma*" (1 Cor 11:29). The last phrase is crucial. It provides the clue for appreciating the Pauline doctrine of the Eucharist as the renewal of the death of Jesus. We must determine what was *this body* which the Corinthians did not distinguish or recognize.

Using modern terminology, would we claim that the Church of Corinth denied the presence of the body and blood of Jesus in the Eucharist? Hardly—if they were instructed by St. Paul. Earlier in First Corinthians, he wrote to the Corinthians: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the sharing of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord" (1 Cor 10:16).

We can also quickly dispose of another possible solution. The Corinthians, gathered for the Eucharistic banquet, did not become so intoxicated as to be unable to distinguish consecrated bread

⁴³ St. Paul writes that he received this tradition "from the Lord." The latter phrase translates the Greek *apo tou Kuriou*. Unlike the preposition *para*, *apo* does not stress immediate and direct reception from the Lord but presumes intermediaries. Against the thesis of Hans Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl* (1926), we can conclude that St. Paul is not writing about a personal revelation from the Lord in which the Eucharist is comprehended differently from the Palestinian church of the early apostles. Jean Héring, *The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Epworth Press, 1962) 111, translates the passage, "I have received a tradition which goes back to the Lord." cf. Gerard S. Sloyan, "'Primitive' and 'Pauline' Concepts of the Eucharist," *CBQ* 23 (Jan. 1961) 1-13; O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship* (Chicago: Regnery, 1953) 17, disassociates himself from Lietzmann.

from other morsels of food. Revelry and sensuality do not seem to have been a regular abuse at the Eucharistic meal at this time; later in Christian history they were. St. Paul nowhere condemns the Corinthians for this kind of sacrilegious reception of the body of the Lord. From the general context of First Corinthians we must conclude that the body of the Lord which the Christians failed to recognize was—in our language today—the mystical body of the Lord, the Church.

At Corinth the body of Christ was being torn by boasting, jealousy and schism. Here is where the Christian separated into those "of Paul," and those "of Apollos," those "of Cephas" and those "of Christ." And Paul retorted: "Has the Christ—*ho Christos*—been divided up?" (1 Cor 1:12-13) The Greek expression, *ho Christos*, refers to the mystical Christ, the total Christ as He now exists.

St. Paul, in chapter twelve, calls the Christian Church simply "the Christ, *ho Christos*." "Now you," he writes again in the same chapter, "are the body of Christ. *humeis de este soma Christou*" (1 Cor 12:12, 27). The pronoun *you*, it will be noted, is plural—i.e., *all of you* are the *one* body of Christ.⁴⁴

Returning to the Eucharistic passage of chapter eleven, we can draw our conclusions. When the Corinthians quarrel and split apart; when they boast as if their gifts were independent of the Spirit inhabiting all the brethren; when jealousy blinds their eyes from seeing distinctly the goodness of others—they are no longer capable of distinguishing the true body of the Lord. Christ simply cannot be adequately and realistically known if he is separated from His full body, the Church. The body of Christ in the Eucharist, therefore, cannot be recognized when Christians have false impressions of the Mystical Body. Unless Christians correctly approach the

⁴⁴ A mammoth bibliography has developed on the Pauline concept of "Christ" or "the body of Christ." cf. B. M. Ahern, "The Christian's Union with the Body of Christ," *CBQ* 23 (1961) 199-209. Another article which interconnects with our own is by Sylvester Makarewicz, "The Eucharist, Bond of Unity in St. Paul," *The Holy Eucharist and Christian Unity*, 43rd Franciscan Educational Conference, Vol. 43 (Louisville 5, Ky.: Bellarmine College, 1963) 220-240.

world of their fellow men, they cannot recognize God's presence in the world, a presence which constitutes the true and total Christ.

We are in a position now to state how the Eucharistic celebration "proclaims [or, preaches] the death of the Lord until he comes." To celebrate the Eucharist worthily, Corinthians must forgive and forget offenses against one another, they must endure humiliations and persecutions from outsiders. They must conquer and put to death the rebellious *sarx* around and within them. In the full mystical body, assembled for the Eucharistic ceremony, they witness publicly to what they truly are—Christ, alive, and by that life, constantly dying as the Spirit overcomes the weakness of rebellious flesh, their *sarx*.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Paul Neuenzeit, *Das Herrenmahl Studien zur paulinischen Eucharistieauffassung* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1960) 127ff, studies "Die Proklamation des Todes des Herrn." But he comes to no definite conclusion on how the Eucharist proclaims the death of the Lord. "Über die *Art und Weise der Proklamation* in Gottesdienst kann man nur Vermutungen anstellen." He quotes from Arnold, Jeremias, Delling and Schürmann, all of whom seem to dwell upon external elements of the Eucharistic ceremony: the red wine; separate gifts of body (bread) and blood (wine); the breaking of the bread; etc. Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955) 164, comes closer to the conclusion reached in this study. Commenting on the following phrase "until he comes" Jeremias writes: "That means the Eucharist is an *anamnēsis* of the Kyrios, not because it reminds the Church of the event of the Passion, but because it proclaims the beginning of the time of salvation and prays for the inception of the consummation." Julius Schniewind, "Kataggello in NT," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum NT 1* (Stuttgart: 1933) 70, explains the word as some kind of liturgical preaching on the occasion of the Eucharist. Max Thurien, *The Eucharistic Memorial, Part 2. The New Testament* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961) 65, writes: "To proclaim the Lord's death means to make present in the eucharistic action, illuminated by the Word of God, the unique event of the redemptive death of Christ, of His sacrifice on the cross. The proclamation of the Lord's death has therefore an essentially liturgical character: through Word and Sacrament the saving event is present." Earlier he wrote: "The proclamation is *not* a form of teaching but the solemn pronouncement of a fact or of a person." (p. 64) M.-E. Boismard, "L'Eucharistie selon Saint Paul," *Lumière et Vie* n 31 (Fev. 1957) 100, identifies "the proclamation of the death" with "the cup, the new covenant in my blood." Our own explanation includes the thought of these authors, but advances beyond them. We place the liturgical proclamation of Jesus' redemptive death not in any formulas pronounced at the Eucharistic service but rather in the liturgical assembly of the faithful who publicly witness by their charity, forgiveness, etc., to what the Eucharist is. They are Christ; they relive the moment of His redemptive death. What they are,

Can we advance our thought one step further? Can we say that the assembly of the Mystical Body does more than symbolize the humiliation and the death of Jesus on Calvary? Because the Mystical Body and Eucharistic Body—mysteriously enough—are the one Body of Christ, can we claim that the Eucharistic ceremony is a renewal or commemoration of the Passion and death expressly because the *mystical* body is undergoing sacrifice and death?

The Mystical Christ certainly endures the suffering and the dying of Jesus. It is vitalized by the same Holy Spirit who led Jesus courageously forward to struggle with and conquer the weakness of *sarx*. That same Spirit dwells now within the Body of Christ, the Church, impelling that Body, as St. Paul wrote in Romans, to "put to death the deeds of the flesh" and so to "live" (Rom 8:13). St. Paul, this time in Second Corinthians, expressed it thus: "We the living are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor 4:11).

We cannot separate that death and that life of Jesus in His body the Church from His body in the Eucharist. Right here, then, in this *full* Eucharistic-Mystical Body of Christ, we meet the basis for later theological thought on the Mass. The Mass is truly the sacrifice of the dying-rising Christ, the *one* sacrifice of Calvary continuing now, because what Christ accomplished through the Spirit on Calvary, He now continues to do through the indwelling Spirit in His Mystical Body. The sufferings of Christ *now* in His Mystical Body demands a *sacrificial* presence in His Eucharistic Body.⁴⁶

helps all to understand who is really present on the altar, Christ the Redeemer. The Spirit of Jesus is totally responsible for what the community is. F. X. Dürrwell, *In the Redeeming Christ* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963) 58-59, without elaboration, writes in a way which fully accords with our own conclusion: "Caught up in Christ's sacrifice, in his single sacrificial act, the Christ of all ages, the Church throughout the world, becomes the very body of her Savior in his redeeming act. . . . The Mass is celebrated in order that the Church may become the Mass."

⁴⁶ The place and role of the ordained priest are outside the scope of this consideration. The sufferings of the baptized are not responsible for the full liturgy of the Mass; only the priest possesses the power of consecrating bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Once Jesus is present in the consecrated species, then the mystery of Calvary continues symbolically

When the Mystical Body no longer needs to suffer in overcoming *sarx*, then the transformation of all into the full *soma Christou* will have been completed and the Mass will no longer be celebrated. The eschatological moment will have arrived.

Until the final age of the world recapitulates all things in Christ, something will always be lacking to the Body of Christ. St. Paul, therefore, writes to the Colossians (1:24):

I rejoice now	I bear	for your sake
in the sufferings		
what is lacking of the sufferings	I fill up in my flesh	for his body which is
of Christ		the Church

The parallelism here is striking. Paul's sufferings are identical with "what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ." Sufferings borne "for your sake," he tells the Colossians, are being endured "for his body which is the Church." The sufferings of Christ continue in His Body, the Church, till all the weakness of its *sarx* is transformed into the glorious *soma Christou*.

Just as the great redemptive act of Calvary was absorbed into the liturgy, transforming the Jewish Paschal sacrifice of deliverance from Egypt into the Christian sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, likewise, the continuing act of the sufferings of Jesus in His Mystical Body is drawn into the liturgy of the Mass, proclaiming today the death of the Lord until He comes. Only those who recognize the true and total Body of the Lord can adequately perform this liturgy.⁴⁷

The Eucharist continues the sacrifice of Calvary because it is one with the full Mystical Christ which even today is experiencing the "dying of Jesus." This dying results from the *one* Spirit of Life, granted first to Jesus and through Him to all members of His body, whereby *sarx* is transformed into the *soma Christou*. Each Christian,

(because Christians are no longer nailed to a cross) but also truly (because Christians really suffer). Christians who suffer are "always bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus" (2 Cor 4:10) and constitute *one* body with Jesus.

⁴⁷ In view of these observations, we can recognize a possible Eucharistic reference in Paul's words to the Romans: "I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God—your spiritual service" (Rom 12:1).

therefore, carries forward this transformation of the world into transcendent glory because like Christ he becomes thoroughly incarnated in *sarx*. Through and from the deep spirit of life, divine glory moves outward, struggling, putting to death and thus revealing its full might.

IV. CONCLUSION

The conclusion brings us back to St. Paul's statement: "All things stand created through and unto Christ." This statement applies a long biblical tradition to Jesus Christ. According to the rabbis, God's eternal wisdom, the Torah, controlled the work of creation. Incarnated within the universe, the Torah was the seed of God's word, directing the struggle against hostile flesh till the glorious presence of God be manifest.

Instead of the Torah, St. Paul contemplates Jesus Christ, the perfect image of God, through whom the created universe comes into being. The pure, white light of Christ is refracted into the colors of the universe, and these seek instinctively to be reunited or recapitulated again in Christ Jesus. To become one in their source, struggle and even death ensue, for at its heart the universe has been corrupted with sin. Christ becomes incarnate in the midst of sinful *sarx* and puts it to death, thereby transforming it into His own *soma Christou*. This mystery of life and redemption is most perfectly reenacted in the liturgy.

The liturgy made present the salvific acts of history. The exodus, the Sinaitic covenant, the desert wandering, the conquest of Palestine—all lived again in the cycle of Israel's feasts. When sin corrupted the people and God cleansed them by the fire of exile, expiatory suffering which was so evident in each one's life became a prominent part of the nation's liturgical life. The same inter-connection or identity between life and liturgy continued into Christian times. By becoming one with a suffering sinful people, Christ put to death their *sarx*, transforming it into a glorious, risen body. What happened to Christ's body in the moment of the Passion-resurrection, not only constitutes the Eucharistic body of the Lord but also happens today in His body the Church. On the same score, what sufferings or joys

are experienced by the body of Christ, the Church, at once reacts upon the Eucharistic body of Christ. There is only "one body and one Spirit" (Eph 4:4).

To participate intelligently and religiously in the Eucharist, the Christian must be able to recognize the true Body of Christ, His full Mystical Body. This recognition must necessarily be vital and experiential, so that the Christian participates by living faith in the one Body of Christ, sharing its struggle against sin that the fullness of the godhead be reached. To do this, he must be as completely incarnated in the world of his fellow human beings as Christ is even now.

This participation, like the first incarnation of Jesus, leads to a passion and death; as it continues the mystery of Calvary, the Mystical Body undergoes the dying of Jesus and thus completes the Eucharistic celebration as a full renewal of Calvary. Incarnate in *sarx*, the Christian transcends it by being transformed through the indwelling Spirit into the glorious *soma Christou*. Each putting to death of sinful *sarx* means that at that moment there is the burst of life in Christ Jesus.

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