

## GOD'S ACTION IMMANENT IN THE WORLD OF THE SACRAMENTS

### I. INTRODUCTION

The topic of this talk and discussion is "God's Action Immanent in the World of the Sacraments." The way in which I will approach the topic is from the viewpoint of the theology of revelation. There will be five basic parts to the talk: A general introduction, scriptural considerations, dogmatic considerations, the sacraments as revelation and faith, and some practical consequences.

By way of introduction I would simply like to re-present a few basic facts with which you are all already familiar. In the past few years there has been in Catholic theology a renewed interest in the theology of revelation. This interest had already begun some years earlier in Protestant theology. While there is much that could be said of this renewal, I am, for the moment, interested only in certain points. Basically, I suppose, these points could be conveniently summarized in Father Latourelle's distinction between noetic and dynamic revelation.<sup>1</sup> The noetic aspect emphasizes revelation as a communication of facts about God. The dynamic aspect, on the other hand, emphasizes revelation as the power of God operating in the world. Depending upon which of these emphases we take as primary,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. René Latourelle, SJ, *Theology of Revelation* (Alba House, New York, 1966), pp. 29-30.

On this same topic of the renewal of the theology of revelation, I would suggest the following reading list as most helpful:

John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1956); Emil Brunner, *Revelation and Reason* (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1946); Werner Bulst, SJ, *Revelation* (Sheed and Ward, New York, 1965); Guy de Broglie, *Revelation and Reason* (Hawthorn, New York, 1965); Bernard Lonergan, SJ, "Dimensions of Meaning" in *Collection* (Herder and Herder, New York, 1967), pp. 252-267; Jean Mouroux, *I Believe* (Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1959); H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (Macmillan, New York, 1960); Karl Rahner, "Considerations on the Development of Dogma" in *Theological Investigations* (Helicon, Baltimore, 1966), pp. 3-35, Vol. IV; E. Schillebeeckx, OP, *Revelation and Theology* (Sheed and Ward, New York, Vol. I, 1967 and Vol II 1968).

there is a considerable difference in our theological attitude to both revelation and faith. Emphasis on the noetic aspect of revelation could lead us to the position of seeing revelation as a series of facts about God—facts which are grasped by the human intellect, but which could not be acquired by the intellect without God's revealing act, and even after revelation cannot be intrinsically understood by the human mind. This, of course, leads immediately to a concept of faith as an act of intellectual assent through which, under the influence of grace, we accept the revealed facts as true.

On the other hand, emphasis on the dynamic aspects leads in a different direction. Here God's revelation is the manifestation of God's power. His word does not merely communicate information, but is a creative word which produces the reality which it signifies. In this context it is somewhat easier to see that revelation is a presentation of God to man. It is a personal giving of Himself to us. It is interpersonal contact, a relationship, and as such is transformative of the individual who receives it. Now it is this aspect of revelation which will form the basis for what I am going to say today. I wish, however, to point out that what I am going to say is certainly not intended in any way as a denial of the validity of the noetic aspect of revelation. Yet there is an essential distinction to be considered here. The facts which constitute the noetic aspect of revelation are not themselves the revelation. Instead, I think we must agree that the revelation is the personal self-giving of God. The facts, which can assume the form of dogma, are an expression of that revelation. They are an effort to objectify a relationship and to express that relationship in formulas. It should also be noted here that the emphasis on the dynamic aspect of revelation produces a concept of faith as a personal response within the context of a relationship. It would thus seem that faith as assent to facts is really one aspect of faith. In fact, we might say that faith as assent to facts is really a kind of by-product of faith as personal response.

Basically what I am now going to attempt to show is that the sacraments are understandable as the objectification in the material order of the revelation-faith relationship between God and man. The dynamism of revelation manifests itself in the sacramental order.

## II. SCRIPTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

We may begin with a presentation of the theology of the action of God as it is contained in the Scriptures. In so short a paper as this it will be impossible to make any detailed study. I have chosen, therefore, to concentrate on the writings of Saint Paul, and even there I shall have to be rather selective.

Paul's letters serve our purposes well for two reasons. He is sacramentally oriented, and within his thought we can see the dynamism of God at work, for his letters present us with a scriptural theology in process. My mode of procedure will be to follow a parallel development in three basic areas of Pauline theology: Baptism and the Eucharist, revelation and faith, and Christian transformation.

Paul, as you know, was certainly not a fully equipped theologian on the day of his conversion. For a period of some thirty years, more or less, he lived as a Christian and an Apostle. During those thirty years there was certainly a great deal of progress in his thought, but in almost every instance that progress was sparked by some practical situation in his life or that of his converts. Ideas which are first germinally presented finally take root and blossom out into a whole system of theology, although it remains a somewhat rambling system and is never really trimmed and brought into shape.

It was probably in 51 or 52 AD that Paul wrote his two letters to the Thessalonians. The first of these letters was a message of both congratulations and encouragement. There was apparently a persecution in Thessalonika, and Paul used this as a starting point for his teaching.<sup>2</sup> As Christians they should lead a new life, free of sin.

Even at this early stage revelation is God's message;<sup>3</sup> but it is more than that. It is a divine call to salvation and a consecration of mankind to God.<sup>4</sup> Their way of life must be determined by God's will made known to them and creating Christian love by the operation of the Spirit within them.<sup>5</sup> Their relationship to God has become

<sup>2</sup> I Thess 3,1-2; Acts 18,5.

<sup>3</sup> I Thess 1,8; 2,2,4,8,13; 4,2,5,15.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. use of σωτηρια and αγαπισμὸς in I Thess 5,9; 4,3,7.

<sup>5</sup> I Thess 1,5; 2,13; 4,1,3,7,9.

bound up in their relationship to each other, so that they now preach the word by mutual example and encouragement.<sup>6</sup> In their union with Christ the Spirit gives his gifts and prophecies are made.<sup>7</sup>

In the second letter to Thessalonika Paul has one sentence which seems to sum up his concept of revelation at this stage of his development: "We have always to thank God for you, brothers, whom the Lord so loves, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved through consecration by the Spirit and through faith in the truth, and called you to it through our preaching of the good news, so that you may share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>8</sup> It is also in this epistle that Paul points to the Thessalonians as being themselves the sign of revelation.<sup>9</sup> The newness of their lives is the sign of the presence of God's word. Yet their lives are to be lived in the normal conduct of daily activity.<sup>10</sup>

In these two letters, then, we are already faced with the most basic Pauline concepts which will later be drawn out into the themes of baptism and Christian transformation.

A few years later Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians. He seemed to be greatly concerned about the Judaeo-Christians who wished to impose Jewish Law on all converts from paganism.<sup>11</sup> In this context he begins to make a new distinction between adherence to the Law and adherence to the person of Jesus in whom they have salvation.<sup>12</sup> A transition begins from the static concept of revelation as a written word to the dynamic concept of revelation as a personal and living word.<sup>13</sup> To prove his point, Paul argues that the promise of salvation was made to Abraham before the Law was ever given.<sup>14</sup> The promise was finally fulfilled, but again this occurred outside the Law, since it came through Jesus crucified; and one who was crucified was outside the Law.<sup>15</sup> The true descendants of Abraham are

<sup>6</sup> I Thess 4,18; 5,11.

<sup>7</sup> I Thess 5,10-22.

<sup>8</sup> II Thess 2,13-14.

<sup>9</sup> II Thess 1,5,10.

<sup>10</sup> II Thess 3,6-15.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Gal 1,6-9.

<sup>12</sup> Gal 1,1-5; 1,12; 2,16; 2,18-21; 3,1-2.

<sup>13</sup> Gal 1,4; 2,16,18; 2,20-21; 3,2,8; 3,10-14; 5,4.

<sup>14</sup> Gal 3,1-25.

<sup>15</sup> Gal 3,13; cf. Dt 21,23.

those who are descendants by means of faith in Jesus.<sup>16</sup> This union in faith is expressed in baptism, since it is in baptism that one is clothed in Christ.<sup>17</sup>

In the first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul begins to express this notion of unity with Christ even more deeply. God has revealed the mystery of salvation.<sup>18</sup> This mystery is the wisdom of God, but it appears as folly to all who do not have faith.<sup>19</sup> It is here that Paul draws a distinction between the "material" man and the "spiritual" man.<sup>20</sup> It is our union with the Spirit of God which enables us to know God, to fathom his mystery, to communicate this knowledge and to call upon God as Father.<sup>21</sup> The material man will not only not accept God's wisdom, *it is absolutely impossible for him to do so.*<sup>22</sup> The very being of the Christian has been changed and he can therefore expect to be misunderstood by the world.<sup>23</sup>

The concept of unity in faith in Christ is further developed as Paul speaks of unity in the Body of Christ. As he turns to this theme, he enters into a very complex development of the concepts of Body, Eucharist, baptism, Spirit, unity and revelation. In the earlier letters Paul had already spoken of the oneness of the Christian with Christ.<sup>24</sup> He seems to be using a metaphor of the body taken from a Greek fable, but he develops it from a metaphor into a mystical reality.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Gal 3,7.

<sup>17</sup> Gal 3,26-29.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. I Cor 2,1 (read μυστήριον for μαρτύριον); 3,1-4.

<sup>19</sup> I Cor 2,6: Cf. F. Zorell, SJ, *Lexicon graecum Novi Testamenti* (Paris, 1961), τέλειος, col. 1308: "(2) de personis: *homo matura aetate, corpore animoque plene evoluto. . . : inde accepta imagine is dicitur perfectus Christianus qui sive in fidei cognitione sive in morum Christiano dignorum integritate multum profecit ac maturuit; οί τέλειοι I C 2,6, sunt Christiani sapientiae sublimioris capaces, idonei ad percipienda ea quae sunt spiritus Dei, in christiana cognitione ac virtute maturi . . .*"

<sup>20</sup> I Cor 2,14-15: ψυχικός άνθρωπος and πνευματικός.

<sup>21</sup> I Cor 1,5; 2,1-16; cf. Gal 4,6.

<sup>22</sup> I Cor 2,15-16: ὁ δὲ πνευματικός ἀνακρίνει μὲν πάντα αὐτὸς δὲ ὑπὸ, οὐδεὺς ἀνακρίνεται. Cf. Wis 9,13; Is 40,13.

<sup>23</sup> I Cor 3,22-23; 5,1-6.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. II Thess 2,14; Gal 3,26; 4,6,19.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. J. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Milwaukee, 1965), "Body," pp. 100-102; J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body* (*Studies in Biblical Theology*, No. 5), (London, 1963); L. Cerfaux, *The Church in the Theology of Saint Paul* (New

Paul seems to have first thought of this concept of the Body of Christ as a solution to the problems of sexual immorality in Corinth. This in itself opens the way to an interpretation which goes far beyond the metaphorical. He seems to be speaking of the Body of Christ not in the sense of a society as a metaphorical body, but rather in the sense of the real physical body. Basically there are two reasons for making this assertion. The first is simply the context in which the Body-concept appears. Paul is arguing that sexual immorality is wrong because of the sacredness of the human body. One cannot become one with the body of a prostitute, because he is already one with the body of the Lord.<sup>26</sup> If the body of the prostitute

York, 1963), pp. 262-286; *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. X, (New York, 1953), pp. 3-262.

A fable representing society as a body seems to have been quite popular in the Greek world. Robinson (*op. cit.*, p. 59, note 1) gives a long list of authors who refer to it in one way or another. He then says: "The fable as it is related by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Antt. Rom.*, III, 11.5) is worth quoting in part. 'A commonwealth resembles a human body. For each of them is composite and consists of many parts; and no one of their parts either has the same function or performs the same services as the others. If now these parts of the human body should be endowed, each for itself, with perception and a voice of its own and a sedition should then arise among them, all of them uniting against the belly alone, and the feet should say that the whole body rests on them; the hands, that they ply the crafts, secure provisions, fight with enemies, and contribute many other advantages toward the common good; the shoulders, that they bear all the burdens; the mouth, that it speaks; the head, that it sees and hears and comprehending the other senses, possesses all those by which the thing is preserved; and then all these should say to the belly, "And you, good creature, which of these things do you do? . . ." Then follows a defence of the belly, as sustaining all, though it seems to do nothing but take in; and the same argument is applied to the function of the senate within the commonwealth.

"Now, Paul may certainly have derived his language in I Cor 12 (though not necessarily elsewhere) from these or similar sources. But the differences should be carefully noted. (1) We are in these writers dealing simply with a simile ('A commonwealth resembles a human body'). For Paul, however, this is not merely a simile, but a mystical truth' (H. Lietzmann, *ib.*, 52; cf. J. Weiss, in Meyer's *Kommentar, I Kor.*, 302): the Church is the body of Christ. (2) Paul's point is not to demonstrate the need for unity among the members, nor to prove which is the greatest, but to show that the body must be made up of more than one person—quite superfluous in the case of the commonwealth, most necessary in the case of an individual organism. The whole underlying conception is different."

<sup>26</sup> I Cor 6,12-20. Reference to actual physical bodies is also indicated in

is in the real physical order, and the body of Christ is not, then Paul's argument makes no sense at all. The second reason is the concept of body and soul as it appears in the Old Testament and in hebraic thought. Whereas we tend to make a dichotomy of body and soul and treat them as distinct entities, the mentality that we find in Paul's writings is quite different. For him the reality is the person. The body is the manifestation of the person in the physical order, and the soul is the manifestation of the person in the spiritual order. Thus when Paul speaks of unity in the body of Christ he is really speaking of our unity in the humanity of the person of Jesus. At this point in Paul's theological development, then, it would be much better to say that the Christian is united to the humanity of Christ than to say that the Church is like a body.

This same reality of the body is brought out in Paul's statements on the resurrection.<sup>27</sup> He does, of course, speak of the "physical" body which is sown and the "spiritual" body which arises, but this seems rather analogous to the later terminology of natural and supernatural.<sup>28</sup> The common element is still the human body (σῶμα). Just as the death of Adam was the cause of our death, so the resurrection of Christ is the cause of our resurrection.<sup>29</sup> In both cases there is a unity of humanity which accounts for the sharing in death and resurrection.<sup>30</sup>

There is again an emphasis on the physical body of Christ in what Paul has to say on the Eucharist.<sup>31</sup> The Eucharist is a sign of

the fact that Paul says that their bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit who is within them, which they have received from the Father. The metaphor of the temple is based on the reality of the body.

<sup>27</sup> I Cor 15,1-59.

<sup>28</sup> I Cor 15,44: σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν.

<sup>29</sup> I Cor 15,21.

<sup>30</sup> There has been a tendency among Catholic apologetes of the last century to take Paul's statements on the resurrection in a purely apologetic fashion. When he says that unless Christ is risen our faith is in vain, the apologete takes the resurrection as a sign external to the revelation and confirmative of it. However, Paul's emphasis on Adam and Christ gives a much deeper meaning. He is really saying that as Adam's death is the cause of ours, so Christ's resurrection is the cause of ours. The foundation of the causality in either case is the solidarity of our humanity.

<sup>31</sup> I Cor 10,14-17; 11,17-34. It is quite clear that Paul is making no effort here to prove the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This he presupposes

unity with Christ and with each other. Its unitive value, however, is not simply in the fact of sharing a common meal, but in the fact that by sharing the one bread we become members of one body.<sup>32</sup> Again it is a question of our entrance into the humanity of Christ.

Baptism is also a source of unity in Christ.<sup>33</sup> Paul says that we have all been baptized in one Spirit into one body.<sup>34</sup> The only meaning that can really be drawn from this is that baptism actually unites us in some way with the physical body of Christ.<sup>35</sup> If the meaning is merely metaphorical, then the word "body" (σῶμα) is used here to mean a collectivity. This cannot be justified from Greek usage at the time of Paul. Even when the word is used in accord with the usage produced by the fables, its meaning is that of unity rather than collectivity.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, when Paul concludes that we are

and it serves as the basis of his conclusions. The fact that the "body" in these passages is the physical body of Christ and not the metaphorical body of the Church is indicated in the fact that Paul also refers to the blood of Christ. If "body" is metaphorical, then there is no recognizable meaning to be attached to "blood."

<sup>32</sup> I Cor 10,17.

<sup>33</sup> I Cor 1,13-17; 10,1-5; 12,12-31.

<sup>34</sup> I Cor 12,13.

<sup>35</sup> To say that the meaning of "physical body" is the only one possible in I Cor 12,13, may seem at first to take too narrow a view of the verse in question. However, this interpretation is based on a number of factors. The first of these is that the whole emphasis of "body" in this epistle has been on "physical body." This in itself would lead one to say the same here. Further, if we were to take body (σῶμα) here to refer to the body of Christ in the sense of the body of the Church, then εἰς ἓν σῶμα would mean that we are baptized in order to form the one body (Church). In no other case does βαπτίζεσθαι εἰς have this meaning. Cerfaux writes (*op. cit.*, p. 270):

"The translation which runs: 'For it is also in one Spirit that all of us have been baptized for the purpose of (forming) one body' (Allo), in which εἰς has the meaning of purpose, seems to deviate from Paul's phraseology. The words βαπτίζεσθαι εἰς as a rule introduce a mention of the person with whom we enter into relationship through baptism (Christ, Paul, Moses): εἰς Χριστόν Ἰησοῦν Rom 6:3; εἰς Χριστόν Gal 3:27; εἰς τὸν Θάνατον αὐτοῦ Rom 6:3; 6:4; εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου 1 Cor 1:13,15 (see Matt 28:19; Acts 8:16; 19:5); εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν 1 Cor 10:12. 'To be baptized into the name of' or 'into the death of' are variations. If we grant that σῶμα conjures up the idea of the death of Christ, the formula εἰς ἓν ὄνομα presents a certain parallelism with εἰς τὸν Θάνατον in Rom 6:2,4."

<sup>36</sup> Cerfaux (*op. cit.*, pp. 272-275) writes: "In actual fact the argument is centered on the word σῶμα. If this word can take directly the collective mean-

Christ's body and individually members of it,<sup>37</sup> he is speaking of the physical body of Christ and is not simply using the word "body" as a metaphor for the Church. This reverses the problem of unity as we usually conceive of it. The problem for Paul is not how the many

ing of the social body, which in the concrete is the Church, it will be quite natural to understand 'baptism into the body' as meaning incorporation into the Church. But at the time at which Paul wrote, did *σῶμα* have this meaning of a body of people? . . . F. De Visscher was not willing to resign himself to ratifying the consensus of opinion. His protestation, although it is on very different grounds from ours, links up with our problem and confirms us in our views. 'It is the very meaning of "collectivity" which all the authors up to now have given to the word *σῶμα* that is the essential obstacle to all these interpretations,' he writes. 'In spite of all our research it has proved impossible to discover meaning is not a Greek one.' . . .

a single example in which this word designates a collectivity. *Σῶμα* means a unity, a whole but never a collectivity. And I think that I can assert that this "For similar reasons we refuse to see in *σῶμα* the meaning of 'social body.' The Church is a body only by way of allusion to the principle of unity which is the body of Christ, and *σῶμα* without anything to which it is referred, and even more *ἐν σῶμα* means a human body or the body of Christ, but always a physical person.

"On the other hand, Huby is correct in writing that the other interpretation, 'current among the moderns, is also that of the Fathers.' And he makes this emphasis: 'The ancients did not suspect this exegesis. Saint John Chrysostom explains *εἰς ἓν σῶμα* as "in order that we all may be one body"; Pelagius, *ut unum corpus efficeremur in Christo*; Saint Thomas, *in unitatem Ecclesiae quae est corpus Christi*.'

"It is not lightly that we have given up the customary exegesis, or that of the Fathers. But they were writing at a time when an evolution in language and meaning was taking place, both in the non-religious world and in theology. From the end of the first century *corpus* began to refer to academies, and in the second and third centuries it was very common for it to have the meaning of academies run by professional teachers. On the other hand, the influence of the epistles of the captivity imposed the formula, 'the Church, the body of Christ,' on Christian language. Under these conditions it was natural that an exegesis, which was focused more on theology than on history, should have neglected slight changes in meaning, and introduced into the notion of *σῶμα* all the development which took place later."

Cerfaux (*op. cit.*, p. 273, note 24) quotes F. De Visscher (*Les édits d'Auguste*): "*Ibid.*, p. 91. The author adds in a note (*ibidem*, n. 2): 'Moreover, a collectivity can be thought of as a unity, a *σῶμα*. From this point of view expressions such as *σῶμα τῆς πόλεως* (Dinarchus, K. Δημοσθένους, 110) are perfectly according to rule. According to stoic ideas, which, as we shall soon see, were echoed in the Roman jurists, the city forms a *corpus ex distantibus*. For these philosophical doctrines, see especially Schnorr V. Carolsfeld, *Geschichte der juristischen Person* (Munich, 1933), p. 177 *et seq.* The determination of this

can be one, but how the one can be many. His point is not that the members are diverse and therefore are joined in one body. The real point is that there is diversity without destruction of unity. Paul is showing that the diversity comes from the unity, and not the other way around.<sup>38</sup>

We can conclude that for Paul we have been incorporated into Christ so that we are one body, one person with him. We may apply this to revelation. Now when we say that in Christ we have grown rich in power of expression and capacity for knowledge, the meaning is much more real, because we have received the word and knowledge of Christ himself.<sup>39</sup> We have become the revelation of God in the world. We proclaim a crucified Christ not only by our words, but by the very fact of what we are.<sup>40</sup> Through union with the risen Christ we have received the Spirit and so can understand the mind

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σῶμα by the kind of unity to which it belonged, does not upset in any way the fundamental meaning of the word. On the other hand, it would be completely incorrect to determine this σῶμα by the elements which compose the collectivity (σ. τῶν πολιτῶν), a form of which we have no example.' In this passage 'to be baptized to form one body,' that is, one collectivity, makes us think of a *corpus* of Christians. We would be thinking in these categories only if we gave σῶμα the meaning of 'social body,' and with De Visscher we believe that 'this meaning is not Greek.'

<sup>37</sup> I Cor 12,12-31; cf. v. 27.

<sup>38</sup> J. A. T. Robinson (*op. cit.*, pp. 58-60) writes: "Is it really conceivable that Jesus Christ can be many persons? That was the problem with which Paul wrestled, and later, the conviction which we see him trying to impress upon his readers. For us, starting as we do with our conception of the Body of Christ as a society, the most pressing problem is how the many can be one. The multiplicity is obvious, the unity problematic. For Paul, the difficulty lies the other way round. The singularity of Christ's resurrection body is taken for granted, just as it was by those who saw it on Easter morning. It is the fact that it can consist of a number of persons that really calls for explanation. So we find Paul opening his longest discussion of the Church as the Body of Christ with the words: 'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ' (I Cor 12,12). The unity of the body proceeds to show that the body cannot in fact consist only of 'one member,' but must be 'many' (v. 14). The point of the verses that follow (15-21) is not that the different members must be united among themselves (the question of schism does not enter till v. 25, and then it is quite incidental to the passage), but precisely that there must be more than one member if there is to be a body at all."

<sup>39</sup> I Cor 2,8-15.

<sup>40</sup> I Cor 1,22.

of God.<sup>41</sup> What we have received is true spiritual power and not mere factual knowledge.<sup>42</sup> It is in this that we can see the dynamism of revelation. Revelation is communication not of facts but of a person.<sup>43</sup> Since our response is to a person and not merely to facts, it must be a response of love and not merely of assent.<sup>44</sup> The fact that love is involved hints at the freedom of our faith, but it also tells us that God's revelation is a presentation of his very person and not just a recounting of facts about himself.

For the purposes of this paper we now have the basic develop-

<sup>41</sup> I Cor 2,8-15.

<sup>42</sup> I Cor 4,15-20; cf. I Cor 2,4-5.

<sup>43</sup> We find this same dynamic word in Paul himself. By the favor of God Paul is what he is (I Cor 15,10). His attitude to his own apostleship is reminiscent of that of Jeremiah. Jeremiah could not stop his preaching because the word of God burned within him. Paul says: "As far as preaching the good news is concerned, that is nothing for me to boast of, for I cannot help doing it. For I am ruined if I do not preach" (I Cor 9,16; cf. Jer 20,9).

<sup>44</sup> The love of God and knowledge of God come to have a very intimate and interesting relationship. As Alan Richardson points out (*An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, p. 40; cf. *id.*, pp. 40-49): "Knowledge in the biblical sense of the word is not theoretical contemplation but an entering into subjective relations as between person and person—relations of trust, obedience, respect, worship, love, fear and so on." For this reason to refuse to know God is to refuse to obey and vice versa. The Hebrew word "know" (יָדָע) thus comes to refer to sexual intercourse (Gn 4,1,17,25; Nm 38,18,35; Jgs 21,12; Mt 1,25; Lk 1,34). The relationship of husband and wife represents the most intimate and active knowledge between human persons. True knowledge, then, in this sense is mutual. Even in the Old Testament God is presented as having entered into a most intimate relationship with his people, a relationship which is compared to that which exists between husband and wife (cf. Hos). It is, therefore, no real surprise to see Paul's parallel between relationships with a prostitute and relationship with Christ. The same mutual knowledge is even pointed to explicitly. "In your ignorance of God you were slaves to gods that really did not exist, but now that you know God, *or rather have come to be known by him*, how can you turn back to the old, crude notions, so poor and weak, and wish to become slaves to them again?" (Gal 4,9). "If one loves God, one is known by him" (I Cor 8,3). The reality of this relationship is the basis of the new creation. In Jesus we know and are known, and thus ourselves become a revelation which confirms Paul as an apostle. "If I am not an apostle to other people, I certainly am one to you, for you yourselves in your relation to the Lord, are the certificate of my apostleship" (I Cor 9,1-2). The very acceptance of his preaching is a sign of the presence of God. "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord!' without being under the influence of the holy Spirit" (I Cor 12,3). Our ultimate hope is that we may come to know God as fully as he knows us (I Cor 13,12).

ment of the major Pauline themes. Therefore, instead of taking each of the remaining epistles in succession, I will consider only certain developments in some of them.

In the Epistle to the Romans Paul again takes up the theme of baptism. He returns to the relationship between Law and faith—a relationship which he had examined in the letter to the Galatians. Again he uses the example of Abraham. Yet this time he seems to have as his goal the intention to show that Christ's redemption is universal. In order to establish this universality Paul points to the fact that all men should have known God, but many chose not to know him.<sup>45</sup> It is in view of his purpose to show the universality of redemption that Paul enters into the question of the universality of sin.

In the fifth chapter of the letter to the Romans, despite numerous problems of interpretation, Paul is clearly drawing a parallel between the effects of Adam's sin and Christ's redemptive act. Paul seems to be aware of the necessity of salvation because of the results of Adam's sin on all men and from the effects of the personal sins committed by all men, Jews and gentiles.<sup>46</sup> "As one offense meant condemnation for all men, just so one righteous act means acquittal and life for all men. For just as that one man's disobedience made the mass of mankind sinners, so this one's obedience will make the mass of them upright."<sup>47</sup> If we limit the question to adults we might say that all men in some way share in the guilt of Adam. Beyond this they have chosen to sin personally. The fact of the law makes their offense all the greater, and this law is present for both Jew and gentile. It comes through Moses and the prophets, but it also comes through God's creation. In some way also Christ's

<sup>45</sup> Rom 1-5. In this fact of the culpability of pagan and Jew in rejecting God, there is an interesting implication. In the earlier letters Paul had made it clear that God takes the initiative in revealing himself and that no one can really receive this revelation unless he is internally transformed by the Spirit. The implication then is that even the pagans were culpable in not knowing God, and so they must have been capable of knowing him. In other words, they must somehow already have had revelation and the Spirit. This, however, would be a topic for another paper.

<sup>46</sup> Rom, 5,12-20.

<sup>47</sup> Rom 5,18-19.

redemption affects all men, but again their cooperation is necessary. In both cases, then, there is solidarity of race but there is also freedom.

These considerations move Paul's baptismal theology in the direction of re-creation rather than in the direction of purification and washing.<sup>48</sup> The element of purification becomes subordinated to that of renewal. Therefore the significance of baptism is not the removal of an acquired impurity and return to an original state. Rather it is re-creation and entrance into a new life. There is a substantial transformation. Man in union with Christ is not simply innocent; he is redeemed. This would help to explain his remaining attraction to sin and the constant danger of relapse. Faith is man's whole response to his redemption, so the redemption itself (the re-creation in Christ) is a revelation. We might say that the very newness of life is both revelation and faith. It is revelation in so far as given by God, and it is faith in so far as received by

<sup>48</sup> The notion of baptism as purification and washing is, of course, present in Paul's thought. He had written to the people of Corinth: "You have been washed, you have been consecrated, you have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (I Cor 6,11). In the whole passage Paul is concerned with the morality of the people. By baptism they have been separated from the sinful environment in which they were once content to live. They must now live a new life in accord with their new being. They have been transferred into a new world as a new people. They can, of course, still reject their baptismal inheritance and revert to their former sinfulness, but they are exhorted instead to treat others and themselves with the dignity and respect due to one who has answered the divine call. In the same letter Paul had also presented even more clearly the transition from washing to death and resurrection in the baptismal symbolism. "Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Cor 10,1-2). In the cloud and the sea one can readily see the Spirit and the water of baptism, and in Moses can be seen Christ. Here a new people is formed. The waters now become more than a bath. It is only a small transition in thought to see the waters as saving the Jews and then closing in on their enemies. It is a type of Christian baptism. As the waters close in and destroy the powers of evil, the Christian does die to his former life. He arises a new man in a new people. Christians avoid the old immorality because they are new people. The images of washing and death and resurrection are further explained in the image of clothing (Gal 3,26-27). To be clothed in Christ is to share the life of Christ. Again the result is a newness of being which is clearly far more than a metaphor. The principle of this new life is Christ himself.

man. It is a new life which reveals itself in new activity.<sup>49</sup> This newness of life is again presented as union in the body of Christ.<sup>50</sup> Through this union we are moved from the physical to the spiritual level.<sup>51</sup>

There now remains one further theme that I want to examine. This is the theme of fullness (πλήρωμα), which is found in the letters to the Colossians and Ephesians. Paul's development here includes a new distinction. Earlier he had spoken of Christians as the body of Christ, and the term "body" seemed to refer to the humanity of Christ. There was thus no major distinction between Christ and his body. In Colossians we find Paul speaking of Christ and creation, and he says: "He existed before all things and he sustains and embraces them all. He is the head of the Church, it is his body."<sup>52</sup> It is here that Christ takes on a cosmic dimension. Also, by dis-

<sup>49</sup> Rom 6,5-11: "For if we have grown into union with him by undergoing a death like his, of course we shall do so by being raised to life like him, for we know that our old self was crucified with him, to do away with our sinful body, so that we might not be enslaved to sin any longer, for when a man is dead he is free from the claims of sin. If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, for we know that Christ, once raised from the dead, will never die again; death has no more hold on him. For when he died, he became once for all dead to sin; the life he now lives is a life in relation to God. So you also must think of yourselves as dead to sin but alive to God, through union with Christ Jesus."

<sup>50</sup> The newness of life leads Paul once more to the notion of the body. In the present epistle it is alluded to, but not in the same terms in which it had been presented in the first epistle to the Corinthians. As Paul writes to the Romans he joins the notion of the body to those of law and faith. Here too he joins the image of marriage to that of the body. He speaks of a woman who is bound to her husband until he dies, and then she can remarry. In the passage from law to faith he uses this image of death, but transfers it from death of the law to death of the baptized. The death of the man under the law is the same as the death of the law itself. He concludes: "So you, in turn, my brothers, in the body of Christ have become dead as far as the law is concerned, so that you may belong to another husband, who was raised from the dead in order that we might bear fruit for God. . . The law no longer applies to us; we have died to what once controlled us, so that we can now serve in the new Spirit, not under the old letter" (Rom 7,4-6). The Christian by his union with the body of Christ, a union comparable to that of husband and wife in one flesh, is freed from his physical life (natural life) to share in a spiritual life (supernatural life). Cf. Rom 13,9-10; 14,1; 14,7-8; 15,2.

<sup>51</sup> Rom 7,14,25: ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστίν. ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι . . .

<sup>52</sup> Col 1,17-18.

tinguishing body and head Paul now distinguishes Christ and the Christian without separating them.<sup>53</sup>

In the concept of "fullness" Paul elaborates this distinction. First of all, we should note that the concept of fullness is dynamic. Paul says: "He is the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead—that he might come to stand first in everything. For all the divine fullness chose to dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to God all things on earth or in heaven."<sup>54</sup> "All the fullness of God's essence makes its dwelling bodily in Christ."<sup>55</sup> Here the fullness is connected with the body of Christ. Since this divine fullness dwells in the body of Christ and this body has been identified with the Church, the Christian comes to share in the fullness of Christ by his membership in the body. This means that although fullness and body are not identical concepts, each is necessary to explain the significance of the other.

The notion of fullness contributes to our understanding of reve-

<sup>53</sup> The use of the word "church" should be noted here (cf. Cerfaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-356). In the earlier epistles the use was always in reference to a local assembly (cf. I Thess 1,1; 2,14; II Thess 1,1,4; Gal 1,2,13(?),22; I Cor 1,2; 4,17; 6,4; 7,17; 10,32; 11,16,18,22; 12,28; 14,4,5,12,19,28,33,34,35; 15,9; 16,1,19; II Cor 1,1; 8,18-19; 8,23-24; 11,8,28; 12,13; Rom 16,1,4,5,16,23). From this point on *ἐκκλησία* will also begin to acquire the meaning of the universal community of Christians. Thus, while in the earlier letters "body" was universal and "assembly" was local, the words now begin to become interchangeable in a universal significance.

This universal use of "church" may very well have begun to develop out of Paul's experience in the few years preceding his Roman imprisonment. The practical experience of a collection among the pagans for the support of the Jerusalem community must have left a vivid impression. Its donation and acceptance were a concrete example of the unity of pagan and Jew in Christ. From there it was only a short step to the idea of a universal assembly.

The new distinction between Christ and Christian as head and body can be explained by two factors. The first is this extension of "assembly" to a universal meaning. In its universal aspect the community could easily be conceived as having Christ as its head. The fact of the religious purpose of the assembly and the notion of the Christian as being himself a sacrifice might also lend the whole concept a liturgical significance.

The second factor is the concept of fullness. The dynamic fullness of God dwells in Christ. In redemption it is communicated to the Christian. Yet what Christ possesses perfectly is possessed only incipiently and progressively in the Christian. Again a distinction becomes necessary.

<sup>54</sup> Col 1,18-19.

<sup>55</sup> Col 2,9.

lation and faith. The fullness in the humanity of Christ is revelatory and is the principle of sanctification for creation. In the aspect of faith it is the divine fullness as received by Christians. Yet none of us fully contains that fullness. This leads again in the direction of the body of Christ, for it is in different functions that Christ is fully expressed in the Church.<sup>56</sup>

The fullness of Christ is and remains the source of our fullness. Thus the *πλήρωμα* identifies the Christian with Christ, but also distinguishes him from Christ. The Christian is on his way to a fullness already present in Christ. This progressive fullness begins in baptism.<sup>57</sup> The head is the source of the body's life.<sup>58</sup> We have become dead to the material world and are raised to life in Christ.<sup>59</sup>

The Christian, by his sharing in this fullness, now becomes the revelation of God in the world.<sup>60</sup> His action becomes identified with the action of God. Revelation has united him in the life of the Trinity.<sup>61</sup> Thus salvation is not due to man's action but to God's.<sup>62</sup> In Paul's theology this is the source of sacramental efficacy. Man's action has become immersed in the life of God. "There is but one body and one Spirit, just as there is but one hope that belongs to the call you received. There is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of us all, who is above us all, prevades us all, and is within us all."<sup>63</sup>

### III. DOGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

In considering the theology of Saint Paul we have seen that there

<sup>56</sup> Col 3,11 (states in life); Eph 4,11-13 (offices in the Church).

<sup>57</sup> Col 2,9-12: "For it is in him that all the fullness of God's nature lives embodied, and in union with him you too are filled with it. . . Through your relation to him you have received not a physical circumcision, but a circumcision effected by Christ, in stripping you of your material nature, when in your baptism you were buried with him, and raised to life with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead."

<sup>58</sup> Paul emphasizes this in reference to those who are self reliant. "Such people lose their connection with the head, from which the whole body . . . must be governed and united if it is to grow in the divine way" (Col 2,19).

<sup>59</sup> Col 3,3-4. Cf. Col 3,5-12.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Col 3,16-17.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Eph 4,20-24.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Eph 2,8-10.

<sup>63</sup> Eph 4,4-6.

is an identity between divine and human activity. I would like to take this identity now and consider it briefly under the aspect of divine causality and its relationship to human freedom. My consideration will be taken primarily from the writings of Father Lonergan.<sup>64</sup>

In sacramental activity we seem to have both free human activity and divine omnipotence. At the visible level we have a human act which we say produces a divine effect. The problem of God's immanence in sacramental action runs parallel to the more generic problem of divine causality and free human activity. If we were to find some way to eliminate the apparent contradiction that exists here, then we would have eliminated the attitude which would see the sacraments as purely human but symbolic acts and we would also have eliminated the attitude which would see the sacraments as divine acts in some quasi-magic way. We shall consider the more generic problem first and then make a rather schematic application of this solution to the question of the sacraments.

We may begin with the notion of conditioned necessity, a necessity which in no way destroys freedom. Conditioned necessity is nothing other than an application of the principle of contradiction. We can say that if a man is running, he is necessarily running. The meaning is clearly that the act of running is a free and contingent act, but that it is impossible to be running and not running at the same time.

The second point is that whatever we predicate contingently of God cannot in reality be true unless it be posited merely as a condition consequent to some fitting point of reference outside of God

<sup>64</sup> The presentation will be based on Father Bernard Lonergan's statements in *De Verbo Incarnato*, (*ad usum privatum*, Rome, 1961), pp. 373-388. I will do little other than paraphrase him. Further information on this theory can be found in the following places: Mauritius Flick, SJ, *De gratia Christi*, (*ad usum privatum*, Rome, 1962), pp. 326-348; Maurizio Flick and Zoltan Alszegehy, *Il Vangelo della Grazia* (Florence, 1964), pp. 308-319; Severino Gonzalez, SJ, "De gratia" in *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, Vol. III, (Madrid, 1956), pp. 674-692; Bernard Lonergan, SJ, "Saint Thomas' Thought on Gratia Operans" in *Theological Studies*, 2 (1941) 282-324; 3 (1942) 69-88, 375-402, 533-574; *id.*, *De constitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica*, (*ad usum auditorum*), Rome, 1958), pp. 51-56; Jacques Maritain, *Existence and the Existent* (New York, 1956), pp. 92-128.

(*conveniens terminus ad extra*). What I mean is that when we say that something contingent is to be predicated of God, we seem to be saying that God has acquired a relationship to some contingent thing. Since God is completely simple and totally unchangeable, this relation must be merely in our minds and not in the divine reality. In other words, it must be something contingent which has acquired a relationship to God rather than the other way around. It is this contingent thing outside of God to which we are referring as a fitting point of reverence outside of God.

To apply these statements to the problem at hand: We predicate something contingent of God when we say that he knows or wills or effects a free human act. If this statement is true, then there must be something outside of God which is contingent. There must be some fitting point of reference outside of God if we are to consider as true the statement that he knows or wills or effects a free, created, contingent human act.

We will now assert that this fitting point of reference in the present case must be the free human act itself. If the point of reference is something prior to the act, the free act must follow from it necessarily or contingently. If it follows necessarily, then the act is not free. If it follows contingently, then we have not established a true point of reference. On the other hand, if the point of reference is something other than the free act itself, and yet not prior to it, then it would not be suitable (*conveniens*).

The third point to be considered is the notion of the *signum simultaneum veritatis*. We shall first consider this notion in relation to propositions. Two propositions as *propositions* are said to be *in signo simultaneo veritatis* when both as *propositions* are true because of one and the same reality. This becomes easier to understand when we take as an example the case at hand. Let us take as our two propositions the following: (1) This free, created human act exists; (2) God knows that this free, created human act exists. We have thus two propositions which are true as propositions only if this free, created human act does in fact exist. The first proposition is clearly false unless such an act does really exist. The second proposition must also be false unless there exists some fitting point of reference outside of God, and we have already seen that such a point of reference

cannot be other than the free, created human act itself. Both propositions are true as propositions only if the free, created human act is a reality. This same notion could also be explained in the same way if we were to take as our second proposition either of the following statements: God wills this free, created human act; God causes this free, created human act. In each of these cases the *signum simultaneum veritatis* is the free, created human act in itself as a reality.

Let us now consider the *realities* signified by our propositions, rather than merely considering them as propositions. We shall see that although we were able to say that the propositions were *in signo simultaneo veritatis*, we cannot say the same of the realities involved. This may be shown by considering the fact that cause is prior to effect. God's knowledge, God's will and God's action are the cause of things. They are, therefore, the cause also of free human acts. Divine causality is absolutely prior to any effect. We must say that divine knowledge, divine will and divine action are in no way dependent upon their effects. Rather the effect depends totally and absolutely upon divine knowledge, will and action. In our case we may say that divine knowledge, will and causative action in no way depend on the free, human act which they cause. The free act does not cause God's knowledge of it. Rather, God's knowledge causes the free act.

One further point: God's knowledge and will do not precede the free act only by reason of causality, but also by reason of eternity. Although we speak of God's causative action as though it were in time, we must keep clearly in mind that God's knowledge and will are eternal. We must not allow ourselves to conceive of this as a temporal priority, but must realize its transcendence. We must remember that things which to us are contingent future acts are present to God.

What we have done then is sufficient to answer the basic objection against the notion of free created acts. The objection is that if God's knowledge, will and action are infallible, efficacious and irresistible, then the free human act (as the object of this knowledge, will and action) must be necessitated and cannot really be free. The answer to such an objection is that, based on what we have now

seen, such a free act is necessitated, but by conditioned rather than absolute necessity. However, we have already seen that conditioned necessity is not destructive of freedom. We have seen further that when we say that God causes a free human act, our proposition is not truly in conformity with reality unless such a free act does exist. The free will depends totally on God in its free act, and yet this total dependence neither destroys nor diminishes its freedom.<sup>65</sup>

We are now in a position to say that the application of this theory to Pauline theology can offer us some further illumination on the immanence of God's action in the world of the sacraments. The theory eliminates objections to concurrent divine and human activity. Thus when Paul implies that Christian transformation enables us to enter into divine life, we can take this quite literally. The Christian as revelation is a reality. And so the actions of the Christian in the sacramental order are neither mere symbolism nor magic. They are the actions of God present in the world in the Christian. They are actions dependent upon the newness of being which is Christianity.

I would suggest at this point also that a fruitful line of thought for further development of this application of transcendent causality to Christianity might be found in a study of mysticism. In Meister Eckhart, for example, we find numerous references to the presence of God in the very core of the human soul. In fact, he implies that it might even be better to say that we enter into God than to say that God enters into us.<sup>66</sup> The same concept is found in the works of

<sup>65</sup> While this theory may have answered the basic objection against human freedom, what of objections against the theory itself? One basic objection would seem to be that the solution offered by the theory is merely verbal. This, however, is an illusion created by the fact that the objection to the co-existence of human freedom and divine causality is merely a verbal objection. This is evident in the fact that the *signum simultaneum veritatis* is valid only at the level of the logical (propositional) and not at the level of the ontological. The other basic objection to the theory would seem to be that it involves a vicious circle. It does not prove that there are free acts; it presupposes that there are free acts. The answer here is that the theory is not intended to prove the existence of free acts. It can proceed licitly from the supposition of their existence because it has as its goal merely to show that the basic objection against such acts is an illicit objection.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Raymond B. Blakney (ed. and transl.), *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation* (New York, 1941).

Saint Theresa of Ávila.<sup>67</sup> In her *Interior Castle* one can follow the progress of a soul in prayer. It begins at a level in which the individual is conscious of his activity in prayer. His attainment of God seems to be left to his own resources. Gradually he becomes aware of the presence and activity of God and then realizes that he has been taken over by divine activity. Finally he knows that he has entered into the life of God, whereas before he felt that God was within him.

#### IV. THE SACRAMENTS AS REVELATION AND FAITH

At this point I will simply presuppose that the sacraments do cause a real change in the recipient. The question that we will discuss is not the fact of such a change, but the manner of the change and its relationship to faith and revelation.

That there is a transformation in the recipient of the sacraments is undeniable on the basis of Pauline theology. The transformation is most evident in the case of baptism. In this instance no one would deny that faith is necessary (at least on the part of the recipient). This is clear in the fact that theologians would certainly agree that a person who had no faith could not receive the sacrament of baptism validly. It would have no effect on him. This means further that faith is necessary for the actual confection of the sacrament. I would suggest that just as this is true of baptism, so is it true of all the sacraments (even though the Eucharist might pose some problems of explanation).

Now faith without revelation makes no sense. Therefore, if the sacraments necessarily involve faith it follows that the sacrament must also involve revelation. The sacrament itself must somehow be a revelation. The problem that might be present in accepting this statement would seem to arise from a concept of revelation which would be limited to the noetic aspects of revelation. Once we admit the dynamic aspect then it becomes relatively easy to say that the sacrament is revelation. In it we have contact with God, and it is this personal contact which is the dynamic element of revelation.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. E. Allison Peers (ed. and transl.), *Complete Works of Saint Theresa*, 3 Volumes, (New York, 1957<sup>5</sup>).

On the basis of what we have already seen, we can say that it is possible for God's action to be immanent in the sacraments only because God's causality can transcend all other causality. Further, we can also say that revelation and faith are two sides of the one coin. When we look at the divine cause we speak in terms of revelation, and when we look at the human recipient we speak of faith. The reason for this is that the predication of revelation of God is the predication of a contingent reality of God. This demands that there be a convenient *terminus ad extra*. In the order of noetic revelation we could then say that revelation itself consists in the elevation of a man's mind to the point where it begins to see reality as God sees it.<sup>68</sup> In the order of dynamic revelation (and therefore in the order of the sacraments) we can say that the *terminus ad extra* is the transformation of the recipient. Thus the sacraments become intelligible as the objectification in the material order of the revelation-faith relationship between God and man.

#### V. PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES

There are some practical consequences which follow from this notion of revelation and the sacraments. I will not attempt to develop these consequences here, but I would like to indicate some lines for further thought.

I think that the most important consequence is the influence of such a theory on spiritual direction. The director should understand, first of all, that those persons whom he directs are being drawn by God. He should respect this attraction and try to understand how it is being accomplished. His function is not simply to impose an external spirituality upon them. Nor is it merely to regulate the external activities of their spiritual lives. He should attempt to understand how God's causality is operating in and through them and he should make it his task to help them become conscious of their presence within the life of the Trinity. He should attempt to make them conscious of God's action in the sacraments, and this will depend in

<sup>68</sup> Cf. *Summa contra gentiles*, III, c. 154, 4: "Revelatio fit quodam interiori et intelligibili lumine mentem elevante ad percipiendum ea, ad quae per lumen naturale intellectus pertingere non potest."

great part upon his own consciousness and attitude. He should be making every effort to make them aware that their knowledge and love of God is not simply theirs. It is Trinitarian love and knowledge, and it is as though God himself knows and loves himself in a divine way in us. Our love and knowledge must somehow be his.

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