

Christ the Liturgy

William O. Daniel, Jr.

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Synopsis

This thesis is a constructive work in theology. The aim is to show the centrality of liturgy for theological investigation, exposing how liturgical action at once shapes and gives rise to theological articulation and also manifests an implicit theology. The meaning is in the making, as it were, and this thesis seeks to show the descriptive nature of theology and liturgy as that which makes all theology possible. What is liturgy? Following the earliest usage of *leitourgia* in the ancient world, and especially as articulated by Saint Paul, Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Irenaeus, I show that the Church's earliest articulation of liturgical action bears an implied ontology of participation, namely in the singular liturgical action of Christ. Liturgy is not, therefore, to be defined or understood as "the work of the people," but rather as the "work of the One for the sake of the many," in which all of creation participates. I argue that the human is to be understood as a liturgical animal who by virtue of her being(-)created is incorporated into the *Liturgy* God *is*. I also argue that *liturgy* names the inter-offering of the Persons of the Trinity, whereby each hypostasis exists as mutually constituting and constituted. The human's participation in this liturgical action is a participation of the whole person, mediated by the materials and movements involved in the liturgical action—liturgy as the mediation of the divine economy. I also show how late medieval liturgical reforms issue a gradual and unwarranted relegation of the laity's involvement in the liturgical action. Although inadvertent, this continual extraction of lay participation serves to secularize their role and extract them from the economy to which the liturgy is meant to assimilate. All of this is to expose how the liturgical action, which was vastly influential to the social imaginary of the medieval world, construes and conditions the human more and more along a secular line. Additionally, it is to recover the essential nature of liturgical action for social construction. Indeed, liturgical action *as* social construction—the embodying of the reciprocal and mutually constituting life of God in whose image the human is created and to whose Being, through Christ *the* Liturgy, the human has been assimilated, is being-assimilated, and will be assimilated.

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Abbreviations

- ANF *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325.* Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Edinburgh, 1866-72. 10 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.
- NPNF *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church.* Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo and New York, 1886-90. First Series: 14 vols. Second Series 14 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.
- PG *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca.* Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris, 1857-66. 161 vols.
- PL *Patrologiae cursus completus Series latina.* Edited by J. P. Migne. Paris, 1844-64. 221 vols.

Introduction

“For it is an instinct of human beings, from childhood, to engage in mimesis....”

—Aristotle

“Annihilate the Selfhood in me, be thou all my life!”

—William Blake

This essay is about liturgy, especially as it regards the formation of the human imaginary. It is common today to speak of liturgy as “the work of the people,” as the work of gathered persons in the worship of the church. Following the liturgical renewals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the awareness and importance of the laity’s (non-)involvement in the liturgical action was heightened in new and important ways, and a more faithful account of the whole church’s involvement came to the fore. This concern was nothing new. This was in large part the concern of the fifteenth and sixteenth century reformers as well. Of seminal importance in each season of the church is the contrasting of clergy and lay functions within the liturgical action. How to account for the church as a whole body of actors involved in the liturgical drama, not simply an elite group of clerical engineers for a conglomerate of untrained or ill-prepared consumers, stands at the fore. The questions that were posed focused their attention on the apparent chasm that had been created between the layperson and cleric, of which the twentieth century saw a plethora of pamphlets, essays and conferences, culminating with Vatican II with a watershed of theological examination that ensued and continues to this day.

Leitourgia, ever since its use in the translation of the Septuagint, has been broadly understood as and related to the worship of the Temple, naturally

resulting in its employment as that which refers to the worship of the church catholic. This understanding of liturgy continues to present day; however, the need for a more narrow definition was deemed necessary by the various liturgical movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which has more recently gained even greater attention to account for the formation of human desire on the whole—the human as *homo-liturgicus*, and to raise questions of hierarchy within the church and how Christ's body—historical, sacramental, and ecclesial—is constituted.¹ This essay is not an attempt to retrace well trodden ground but is an effort to recapture non-nostalgically what the church throughout the ages has understood itself to be doing in liturgy and how liturgy is understood to inscribe itself upon the bodies of the faithful as the condition for a certain acoluthetic reasoning.² The purpose of this essay, then, is to deal philosophically and phenomenological with the liturgical action in its historic understanding as the constituting of human nature by a mimetic relation to the singular act of God in Christ. Accordingly, Christ is the event of the human's knowing God and herself as an extension of this singular liturgical event, being incorporated into the making-present of the eternal event Christ himself *is*. All liturgical action is hereby rendered participatory in relation to the singular Christ-event, who is in himself the embodied, Eternal Liturgy.

The first part of this work takes issue with the post-Enlightenment definition of liturgy as "the work of the people." This understanding of liturgy, the first use of which seems to have been during *The Fourth General Council* of the Alliance of The Reformed Churches holding The Presbyterian System (London, 1888), is rooted in a nominalist understanding of a divisibility of God and creation. This meaning may not at first be evident; however, to speak

¹ Most notably with Henri de Lubac and Gregory Dix.

² Robert P. Scharlemann, *The Reason of Following: Christology and the Ecstatic I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 117-130. "Acoluthetic, or Christological, reason is that form of reason in which the I of selfhood is exstantial; the inwardness of self is confronted with itself outwardly. It is not the relation to a thou or an it (he, she) but to the I. The mark of this relation is that it involves an ecstatic possibility of the ego" (117). I only came across Scharlemann's work recently, after completing the chapters of this essay. However, his understanding of acoluthetic reasoning as a particular following, a mimetic relation to the known, whereby the self is confronted with itself through this embodied following, is very much akin to Maximus Confessors' understanding of how the human manifests to herself her true identity through the liturgical action, which is dealt with in chapters three and four of this essay.

of "the work of the people" assumes a work, offering, or capacity of the human that the early church privileges only to the Second Person of the Trinity. Liturgy as the work of the faithful inverts the human's relation to the salvific offering of the Son to the Father. That is, this narration of liturgy elicits a lack in God—the lack of God's own worship. Additionally, liturgy as the work of the people separates the liturgical action from the creative agency of the Son and the human's volitive participation in the re-creating of the world, infinitely actualized in Christ. It is notable that the documents of Vatican II, while stressing the importance and absolute need for greater participation in liturgy by the faithful—the laity, do not refer to the liturgy as "the work of the people" or "people's work." This is largely a Protestant construal of the term that, while the Roman Catholic liturgical renewal movements of the twentieth century certainly provide the language and practice for this development, remains imaginable primarily from a post-Enlightenment understanding of an absolute distance between the temporal and the Eternal. The Transcendent is hereby *absolutely transcendent* and there is no mingling of God and creation. I say largely Protestant because there is an implicit Gnosticism to this logic that is largely influenced by articulations of Christ's presence or absence in the Eucharistic action. While Roman Catholics are likewise prone to speak of liturgy as the people's work, it remains within the context of the hierarchical ordering of the ecclesial body determined by one's proximity to the Eucharistic celebration. For Catholic narrations of the liturgical constitution of the body of Christ as Eucharistically mediated, to articulate *leitourgia* as "the work of the people" detracts from the inherent, relational nature of liturgy as that which gathers the people of God into the eternal life of reciprocity that is Holy Trinity.

The first section of this essay will explore how the term *leitourgia* is employed throughout the classical world and by the fathers of the church. This exploration is to lay the foundation for understanding liturgy both as the essence of divinity manifest in Christ, attested to by the early and medieval church, and as the anagogic relation of participation that is the essence of the church catholic, with explicit reference to how this is articulated by Maximus Confessor whereby God and the human are mutual paradigms through the

liturgical action of Christ who restores the original co-creative purposes of human nature through imitation and figure in the activity of the church. Liturgy is, therefore, to be understood not as "the work of the people" but as the work of the One for the sake of the many. Christ himself is this "work," this event, who is the Liturgy he enacts—priest and victim, an offering to the Father *for the life of the world*.

An ontology of participation is of utmost importance in this regard, especially as this relates to human self-knowing as *a liturgy of Christ the Liturgy*, which is in keeping with the earliest articulations of *leitourgia* by Saint Paul, Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, et al. The above is in no way to deny the role of the human in the liturgical action nor is it to denigrate human action in any way; rather, it is to show how the vitality of human action bears no meaning except in a contingent relation of participation to the singular act of Christ who is himself the Liturgy par excellence *for the life of the world*. This, it will be argued, is the inescapable logic of the earliest articulations of the human's relational role as a manifesting agent of redemption, whose liturgical participation is both her participation in Being and her teleological function as one who gathers creation into the eschatological reality of Christ's reconciling the world to himself through recapitulated human nature. While some commentary on *leitourgia* in its historic use has been done,³ little exploration as to the implications of defining liturgy in this way has been conducted, nor has the importance of sustaining the singular reference of *leitourgia* to Christ as the absolute fusion of offerer, offering, and act of offering been either strong or clear enough, especially in the West.

Central to this thesis is the early church's understanding of the perichoretic life of the Trinity. The second chapter of this work, then, unpacks the historic understanding of the perichoresis beginning with the reciprocal natures within Christ, who, following John of Damascus, penetrates humanity that humanity might penetrate divinity. Following the Cappadocian Fathers it will be shown how this understanding of perichoresis is used later to explain the inner economic life of the Holy Trinity as a community of Persons who

³ See Odo Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, ed. Burkhard Neunheuser (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), and Michael Kunzler, *The Church's Liturgy* (London: Continuum, 2001) as helpful starting points.

know only as each is known by the other Persons. The absolute reciprocity of giving and receiving, proceeding and returning, that is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the life of Liturgy made manifest in Christ, whose unconfused union of human nature to the Eternal Son is the assimilating action that gathers creation into the Eternal Liturgy God is. It is the human's entering into the being-known of God, whereby the Father knows himself as Father of the Eternal Son, and by whose Spirit has assimilated human nature to himself, knowing himself as Father only of the Son in his unconfused union with human nature, to the glory of the Father, for the hope of humanity and for the world's redemption. Relating the perichoretic dynamism within the Triune economy to the liturgical action of the ecclesial body is key for understanding how the early and medieval church describes the worship of the church. To know the God who has come in Christ is for the early church nothing short of a re-membering, whereby anamnesis is not a mere cognitive exercise of "not-forgetting" but a memory of membering—being assimilated to that which one knows and by which one is known. Liturgy so understood is more akin to a co-habiting, which is to say that through the liturgical act of making Eucharist the participant comes to inhabit the space of Christ's body through Christ's inhabiting the body of the human, gathering her into his own eternal offering of himself to the Father. It would be impossible, therefore, not to unmask how the early and medieval church understood this totalizing reality to be discernible to the faithful. In this section we will explore Gregory of Nyssa's dictum for the Christian to "know thyself," which is not to be compared to modern notions of self-awareness; rather, for Gregory this form of knowing is akin to Aristotle's *phronesis*, whereby knowing is inseparable from the form of knowing, inseparable from the *habitus in, by and through* which the human is disciplined to know. Knowledge of God is attained only by doing the works of God in Christ, imitating the liturgy Christ himself is, which conditions the perceptive capacity of the human to see all things in their christic relation.

The third chapter will extend the range of this formative knowing by engaging the works of Maximus Confessor, reading him alongside the phenomenological investigations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty in order to

appreciate the full sense of how the human, through the habitus of the liturgically constituted body, manifests to herself her ontologically contingent reality as a *logoi* of the Logos, a liturgy of the Liturgy. Maximus understands the human's participation in the manifesting of the Christ event in the sense of giving birth.⁴ This giving birth to Christ through volitive participation in the liturgical actions of the ecclesia is that which manifests to the human her recapitulated identity as homo-liturgicus, not simply as a desiring animal, but as one who stands in eschatological tension to the fullness of her relation of participation as one assimilated to the perichoretic economy, known together with the Son.⁵

Throughout this liturgical exploration arises an understanding of time and space as that which is constituted by the liturgical action to be inhabited by the liturgical participant. Understanding the nature of human action as participatory in God's singular act of creating and redeeming creation is critical to any articulation of leitourgia. In chapter four we will work through Ivan Illich's "Tools for Conviviality" to show how the human relates to others and all things through certain extensions of herself—tools, and how these tools either make way for human flourishing or constrict human relating. How a person relates to her tools and how by her tools she relates to others is Illich's concern. We will explore how various technologies lend themselves to invert the relation of the human to her tool, whereby, following John Ruskin, the human becomes a tool, rather than the tool being an extension of the human for the establishing and sustaining of reciprocal relations. For Illich, tools are social mechanisms that construe the human imaginary. This is not necessarily negative; however, it will be explored with Illich how certain forms of tooling contort human relations in inhumane ways. We will further substantiate Illich's argument with Ferdinand Tönnies' "Community and Society" to show how each social structuring narrates and navigates human relations in ways that either promote a common sense of flourishing or institutionalize enmity. The work of each will then be related directly to the

⁴ Maximus, "Commentary on the Our Father," in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003).

⁵ Maximus, "Difficulty 10," in Andrew Louth, trans., *Maximus the Confessor* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 125-126.

liturgy whose formative tooling either gives way to the mimetic manifesting described in the prior sections of this essay or detracts from it. Following, it will be shown how the liturgies of the early church make this formative knowing available to the participant as an active agent in the manifesting of Christ.

The purpose of each section is to show how the church understood the manner by which the human came to know herself as assimilated to God in Christ, relating this to how the human knows by being membered to the knowable—the extent of this knowledge standing in direct relation to the knowers proximity to the known, in order to show that the human is one whose being participates in Being—God, and thereby has existence. The emphasis here is on how the human comprehends her contingent relation through the liturgical action of "making Christ" in the Eucharist. That is, Christ is the single actor who makes himself present in the Eucharist, but the human's awareness of her participatory nature is available to the extent that she is involved in this liturgical manifesting of herself recapitulated and assimilated to Christ in the divine economy.

The purpose of relating the liturgy to human knowing is to show, in chapter five, how this mimetic relation is gradually distanced from the non-cleric throughout the late medieval era. A series of reforms over the course of hundreds of years, largely for practical and even at times pious reasons, serve to alienate the faithful (the laity) from their liturgical identity as manifesting agents in making Christ present. This has little to do with lay reception of the Eucharist, although it is not inconsequential, but rather has to do with the formative movements of the liturgy, once the primary means of the human's knowing herself as one who gathers the world into the divine life. This distancing is to show how the lay participant is conditioned to re-imagine what it means to be human, no longer ontologically conditioned by her participation in the liturgical action, the liturgy having become spatialized in such a way that the procession and return of God from and to himself no longer involves her participation nor, therefore, her co-habitation with God in Eucharistic mediation. This distancing, as I will argue, is a bodily comportment that conditions the human to perceive or imagine herself as autonomous from the

event of knowing that is the liturgy. The movement of liturgy hereby ceases to be an end in itself that gathers into itself the common that terminates in Christ, but serves to distance the common from the holy (sacred and profane) in such a way that a gulf between God and creation enters the human imaginary. The secular human identity, it will be argued, has its roots in the liturgical reforms of the late medieval church that creates conditions of perception whose body-schemas do not manifest what Maximus Confessor calls the "natural nature" of the human, who with God is a mutual paradigm.

This essay is limited in its scope, focusing primarily on western liturgies and their influence. The liturgically inclined reader will also note a lack of more traditional scholarship on liturgy, most notably the work of Dom Gregory Dix. Nevertheless, it will be easy to find his influence throughout. The near absence of such a key figure has to do with the nature of this work. Liturgy is addressed herein as the primary habitus of western culture—liturgy as culture, especially as it exists up to the thirteenth century. The emphasis, then, is on the inseparability of the liturgical actions of the Catholic Church and how it transmits and transforms the social body. By getting at the cultural implications of liturgical forms, this essay seeks to show, as noted above, that what has become known as sacred and secular has a deep history in the liturgically constructed reality of the social body that conditions the human to perceive objects and others, not in their contingent and participatory relation to God, but as isolated and autonomous, related only by social mechanisms that assume an a priori fragmentation. It would be impossible to make a causal link from late medieval liturgy and modern, secular humanism. However, it is the purpose of this essay to show how the dominant habitus of the social body conditions the perceptive capacity of the human, and how this is inscribed upon the human subject in such a way that delimits how she understands her existence, in order to expose the logic of secular humanism inscribing itself upon the faithful in late medieval society.

1 A Genealogy of Liturgy

"If there is anything worth fighting over, it is our words."

– G.K. Chesterton

"God, by whom all things are being made, is the real doer of all that is here done."

– Evelyn Underhill

Introduction

With every logical equation, if the premise is false, though the whole of the formula be valid, the argument must be false. It is this that names the great dilemma of modern liturgical scholarship. Liturgical theology stems from a particular meaning or understanding of the term *liturgy* itself. *Liturgy* is most often defined as “the work of the people,” or “the people’s work.” However defined, it is determinative for where the Church locates human flourishing and fulfillment. Liturgy so understood situates human flourishing within an immanent frame. Defined as “the work of the people,” the Church stops short of its participatory nature as the body of Christ. It will be argued in this section, with the fathers of the church, that *liturgy* is “the gift of one for the sake of the many,” namely the gift of God in Christ *for the life of the world*. Naming as it does the worship of God, from the vantage point of a “people’s work” one could argue that God is never actually worshipped. Man, of his own, is incapable of worship—incapable of making offering to God. Only God can worship God; that is, only God can make offering to God.¹

¹ Later in chapter 5 this particular incapacity will be teased out further, all the while noting how liturgies in many ways effort to sustain this inability to offer but also dislocate the human from the offering altogether. It will also be argued that various liturgical forms and actions often falsely presume a human capacity to offer apart from offering *with* the Son, which elicits a lack within the absolute self-contingency of God.

The liturgical gatherings of the church in antiquity were understood to be much more than social meals or mere ritual gatherings.² The coming together of the body of Christ was itself the reordering of human sensibilities to divine sensibilities. *Liturgy* names this ritual gathering, which creates and is the community it habituates; it is the convergence of thought, word, and deed, rendering the church's being and doing inseparable.³ The identity of the church, then, is inherent to its liturgical action, which has for its paradigm the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus.⁴

Liturgy, so understood, is paradigmatic for Divine-human and human-human relations. It is humanity's participation in the economy of God. This is so because there is but one *liturgy* in which all faithful liturgical activity is a participation and of which it is an enactment. Christ is the *Liturgy*, the singular $\delta\omicron\zeta\alpha$ of and to God, who by his incarnation, death, and resurrection, offers to the Father the *only* holy and acceptable sacrifice *for the life of the world*. Christians are made participants in the Divine self-offering of the Son to the Father, through liturgical rite, whereby they offer themselves *with* the Son to the Father, and by the power of the Holy Spirit their offering becomes the offering of the Son—the Christian becomes offering, becomes *liturgy*. The gathered body re-presents the bread and wine to God, which is of his own bounty, who then reciprocates with transubstantiated gifts—the body and blood of Christ, which renders each as one in the shared Body of Christ. The people become that which they have consumed, granting to their bodies immortality.⁵ The church, therefore, as the body of Christ, is the liturgy of the Liturgy. The church does not perform or enact liturgy. It is the liturgy in which it participates.

In this section I will unpack the use of the term *liturgy* by the early church, tracing its lineage from the ancient Greek $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\upsilon\rho\upsilon\rho\gamma\iota\alpha$, in order to show how the church is identified with Christ in its liturgical action. *Liturgy*, hereby

² Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Continuum, 2005), 48-102.

³ *Ibid.*, 1-35.

⁴ Chapter 4 will also interrogate the logic inherent to liturgical forms of worship and show how the logic of the practice can serve and has served to nullify the particularity of the Christ-offering.

⁵ Augustine, "Tractate 26," 12-18, in *Tractates on the Gospel of John, 11-27*, trans. John W. Rettig, vol. 79, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2003).

understood, is its own end. It is not the means to an alternative end; rather, as a participation in the Liturgy-Christ the church becomes the end she eschatologically is in Christ. The liturgical action is humankind's participation in the economy of the Triune God—the means by which God makes himself available to his people and through which Christians make themselves available to God. Therefore, *liturgy* is the necessary paradigm for all relations, be they celestial or temporal, and all liturgical action must find its intelligibility in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus. *Liturgy* must not be understood, then, as the “work of a people,” but must always be identified as the gift of One—Jesus—in, by and through whom the liturgies of creation participate by being gathered into the reciprocal life of love that is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *Liturgy*, it will be shown, is the doxological identity of the church whereby humanity is caught up in the procession and return of God from and to *himself*—the gift of the Son to the Father through the Spirit, the receiving of the Son by the Father through the same Spirit, and the reciprocal love between Son-bound humanity and the Father through the Spirit.

I

The Greek word from which is derived the term *liturgy* is a compound word literally meaning public (*laos*) work (*ergon*). (λειτο, a derivative of λαος (“people”), meaning “public” and εργα, from εργον (“work”), meaning service/duty/work.) In the ancient world this term carried with it different meanings and was employed in a variety of ways, each having to do with the specific office held or action done that involved a sacrifice of one (λειτουργος) for the sake of the many (πολυς). *Leitourgia* hereby carries the broad meaning of “public service.”⁶ The service does, however, engender that of a sacrificial gift or donation, usually in the form of a financial offering or service rendered without expectation of return payment, e.g. paying for a festival or holding public office. Although *leitourgia* is generally understood to have involved a financial sacrifice/obligation by the individual, the greater weight is placed on

⁶ Sviatoslav Dmitriev, *City Government in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 17-19.

the sacrificial or obligatory aspect of the action itself, as done by one for the sake of the particular *polis* or *demos* involved. The sacrificial element comes out most clearly in the case of military obligations. The citizen is obliged to offer himself for military service, which is his *liturgy*, because of a public need. *Leitourgia* has the double meaning for naming a person's obligation and the nature of the obligation, not because said person is individually culpable for military action, but because the person, as mutually culpable with all other persons in his polis, is capable. His capabilities may be found in his ability to afford the financial expenditure, thereby obligating him to the sacrifice of trierarch, or it may be his strength, thereby compelling him to bear the sword. It is important to note that *leitourgia* in the ancient world does not bear the connotation of "work"; rather, it is more closely akin to something like a "servant-offering," whereby the one who offers *is* his offering, be it a service or *donum*.

In the military obligations of the Greco-Roman world is evidenced the sacrificial, as opposed to financial, underpinnings of this word *leitourgia*.⁷ Even the obligation of an official to afford the expenditures associated with his office, e.g. the official that managed the road systems would be expected to pay for road repair, etc., was not the emphasis of his *liturgy*. The financial aspects of the office could be delegated to another or, as taxable infrastructure developed, covered by taxable income. In fact, Aristotle shows how the sacrificial element of one's *leitourgia* can be abused. A person's ability to afford the expenditure of an office would make him more likely to acquire the post, if he so desired,⁸ as there was a certain prestige that accompanied the liturgical office. In the *Politics*, Aristotle gives the following warning against competing oligarchs and aristocrats:

⁷ See also Frank Tenney, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome: Rome and Italy of the Republic*, vol. I (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1936). "Crews were supplied by liturgy. In 214 (BC) when a fleet had to be equipped quickly for the impending war in Sicily the Senate imposed a "liturgy" on the propertied classes of the kind well known from Athenian practice and from the last year of the First Punic War. Rowers were to be supplied by Private individuals according to wealth. For instance, men rated from 50,000 to 100,000 *asses* must supply and pay the wage of a rower for six months and supply him with food for a month, while senators had to supply eight men for a year. There is no mention of any proposal to repay these outlays" (86).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 43-45.

It is a good thing to prevent the wealthy citizens, even if they are willing, from undertaking expensive and useless public services, such as the giving of choruses, torch-races, and the like.”⁹

Leitourgia was the bearing of a communal burden by those who had the means or ability, so to enable everyone to have a common sense of human flourishing (*eudaimonia*). Because it was a dutiful contribution to society, it was not seen as a charitable act. The gift was almost always compulsory.

Festivals in the ancient world were frequent; there were as many as 90 to over 100 festivals statewide each year, 60 of which were in Athens alone. At the turn of the third century BC, underwriting these festivals singularly became burdensome, giving rise to state allocated funds funneled through the magistrates. In 5th century BC, it would be common for someone to serve as *trierarch* (commander/captain of a trireme) for an entire year to command the trireme (warship). This undertaking not only meant that he would commit himself for an entire year of service, but also that he would absorb the financial expenditures that went along with the maintenance and repair of the ship itself, which is why only the wealthy would be called upon to be a *trierarch*. This was the case for Demosthenes in 4th century BC, whose *liturgy* it was to serve for a year as a *trierarch*.¹⁰ Demosthenes was also highly critical of those who attempted to evade their liturgies. In one of his speeches he admonishes such a person who, by distributing the costs involved in his own *liturgy* among so many people, no longer put forth what in any way resembled a sacrifice.¹¹ What is evidenced in Demosthenes is the nature of the liturgical action or *donum* as sacrificial.

In the classical age, *leitourgia* also exacts a desire for the public good. Aristotle situates *leitourgia* within the context of friendship and concord.¹² And, as aforementioned, he warns against frequent liturgies by individuals,

⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, V.viii, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

¹⁰ Demosthenes, *Orations 50-59: Private Cases in Neaeram*, 53.4, trans. A. T. Murray, vol. 351, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), IX.vi.3-4.

even when they are able. In this regard, Aristotle is not unusual in his employment of *leitourgia*. Though it is the gift of one it is done for the good and concord of the people. It was plainly and simply a matter of good citizenry.¹³ Included in this class of liturgists, then, were not simply the wealthy, but also the priests, doctors, military, or those who provided lodging for travelers to the city. *Leitourgia* for the ancient Greeks was, however, primarily adverbial, describing the manner in which an act was done, i.e. sacrificially. The liturgical action so understood bears an implicit logic of a sacrificial giving of oneself for the good of the body polis.¹⁴

Liturgies in the ancient world were primarily festive.¹⁵ The three liturgies of the *choragus*, *gymnasiarch*, and *hestiator*, were solely for entertainment.¹⁶ It was public entertainment, but entertainment nonetheless. The *choragus* contributed the monies necessary to provide choruses for dramatic and lyric contests. The *gymnasiarch's* liturgy was to organize and pay for and maintain the competitors in the torch races.¹⁷ And the *hestiator* provided food for his tribe's festivals. The choraguses, gymnasiarchs, hestiators, trierarchs, military, doctors, priests, those who opened their homes to travelers, and yes "even jugglers," says Plato, were all liturgists, giving their dutiful services for the common good of the people.¹⁸

In each employment of *leitourgia*, the word is used to express the gift of one, or at least a minority of persons, regarding an act-office, for the sake of the *demes* or people. There is a recognized social need and *leitourgia* names the satisfaction for this need as the sacrificial act of one, or a specified group of persons, for the sake of the social body.¹⁹

During the third and second centuries BC, much of the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, what we know as the Septuagint. The Hellenistic translation of the Hebrew Scriptures becomes very important in

¹³ Demosthenes, *Oration 59*.

¹⁴ Dmitriev, *City Government in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor*, 39.

¹⁵ Peter Wilson, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia: The Chorus, the City, and the Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11-49; see also Ilias Arnaoutoglou, *Ancient Greek Laws: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1998), 117-123.

¹⁷ Arnaoutoglou, *Ancient Greek Laws*, 117-123.

¹⁸ Dmitriev, 34-63.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

understanding the use of *leitourgia*. In the Hebrew language there are any number of words used to make distinctions in office held or action done, with regard to the priestly services. The words ‘*eved*’ and ‘*aboda*’ denote servant and service. *Kohen* is a priest, while *tziva* and *mitzvah* bear the meanings constitute, command, appoint, and privilege. We find these words in Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and elsewhere, all of which are translated into the Greek using the general term *leitourgia* or its derivations. It is the spread of the Septuagint translation that begins to refine the meaning of *leitourgia* as having specifically to do with a ministry or service that is done for God’s honor and glory, as opposed to the more generalized Greek understanding. The ministerial connotations did not do away with *leitourgia* as a general point of reference in Greek society; however, the Hellenistic influence on the Hebrew texts enables the church’s employment of this word to relate specifically to the act-office of Christ as High Priest. Just as the Ancient Greek usage of *leitourgia* has a variety of meanings, each use engendering that of a sacrificial action, likewise does *leitourgia* become for the early church the term directly related to the act-office of a priest.

Paul is of utmost importance in refining the definition of *leitourgia*. Being trained in the most prestigious of Hebrew schools, Paul would have had at his disposal any number of terms to denote the ministry of priests, offerings gathered, or services rendered, but Paul uses *liturgy*, as he does with reference to Epaphroditus as *leitourgon*, in direct relation with one who gathers together the offerings of a people to God. The ministerial connotation pervades here, as someone gathering and offering, or providing service on behalf of a people, to God, for the mutual benefit of all involved. This is Epaphroditus’ *liturgy*, done to God, for Paul, on behalf of the Philippians. The use of *leitourgia* in Paul’s letter to the Philippians takes as its precedence the understanding of the temple priest’s role in the divine drama of sacrificial offering. The Israelites would bring their gifts to the temple, but it was the priest who mediated their offerings to Israel’s God. In Philippians 2:17, 2:25, and 2:30, the term is situated in the context of gathering the offerings of a community for the sake of giving glory to God, whether it is Paul being

poured out as a libation on behalf of the Philippians,²⁰ which is his sacrificial service, his λειτουργια, to God for their mutual benefit (θυσια now being linked here with λειτουργια by Paul) or Epaphroditus' coming to Paul's aid, bearing the gifts and support of the Philippians.²¹

In the letter to the Romans *leitourgia* is used in the same way as it is in Paul's letter to the Philippians. The *minister*/λειτουργον of Christ is the one who gathers the people's—in this case the Gentiles'—offerings together, so that their offering will be acceptable to God by the Holy Spirit, through the apostle of Christ:

I myself feel confident about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. Nevertheless, on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God to be a *minister* (λειτουργον) of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the *priestly service* (ιερουργουντα) of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.²²

Paul makes a distinction here between the particular office of *minister* and the universal *priestly service* of the Gospel. The common service of all people to the gospel of God (ιερουργεω) has within it specific roles for those that make up the ιερουργουντα of all believers, of which Paul's λειτουργια is as an administrator of the world to the Father as one holding the office of apostle. This is also the context of Paul's gathering of the resources from the Macedonians and Achaians,²³ in order to give to the poor in Jerusalem. Paul, as God's λειτουργον, gathers the offerings of the many for the sake of Christ and only then extending it to others; this is his liturgical office—who he *is* in the Divine Economy. As in the classical Greek usage of the term, the act and office are inextricably linked. Paul is the liturgy he enacts—Christ. His liturgical role is to serve as Christ, to gather the offerings of the faithful into the offering Jesus is in himself. Only in this way do the liturgical actions—

²⁰ Philippians 2.17.

²¹ Philippians 2.25, 2.30.

²² Romans 15:14-16.

²³ Romans 15.27.

offerings—of a people become bound to the offering of Jesus to the Father—the one, holy acceptable offering.

It is this gathering together of gifts that becomes of central importance, especially in the letter to the church in Corinth. In Paul's first letter he addresses their shortcomings in the liturgical economy. "When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's Supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry whilst another becomes drunk."²⁴ Paul condemns their practice of gathering together in a public space (*ecclesia*) for a shared meal—the Lord's Supper—and yet having complete disregard for one another, not discerning rightly the make-up of the Body they are in Christ. He emphasizes to the Corinthians that every meal is an image of and participation in the Last Supper when Christ broke bread and gave, not to a few, but to all gathered, even giving his body to one who would betray him. Not to gather the gifts as a single offering to God, that is, not to gather together as one body, is to reject *being gathered* into Christ's Body. The gathering of the body through its offering is the realization of the Church as sacrament—as God's unifying force in the world whereby communication with the triune God is made available.

It is important to note that Paul's criticism of the Corinthian meal is that it has as its paradigm the meals of the idol temples and common meals, whereby social status determines food preference and seating arrangements. The Lord's Supper, however, shifts the paradigm so that all meals, feasts, services of worship, and all bonds of human relations participate in the shared communion of the human with the Father, in Christ, through the Spirit. Not to gather the resources together as shared resources is a refusal to *be* gathered into Christ. Hierarchy of succession, however, is not eliminated with the abolition of a hierarchy of goods. In this light is the bishop best understood as the *primus inter pares*. None are deserving of the benefits of God—none deserve to be gathered into the Godhead—but the same gift is offered to sinner and saint alike, which demands that all goods be shared in common. The corrective for the Corinthians is undergirded by Paul's articulation of giving in his letter to the Philippians, as mentioned above. To give is to give to God,

²⁴ 1 Corinthians 11:21-22.

necessitating as a consequence the benefit to one's neighbor, which has the double-effect of a mutual binding in Christ. (This could also be seen as a positive carry-over of the negative side found in Psalm 51, "against thee only have I sinned." Sins are committed against God, which, as a consequence, fracture the human relationship. Reading this in conjunction with Matthew 5, where the offerer is called to be reconciled with his brother prior to making his offering, shows not that the brotherly relation establishes the relation to Christ; rather, reconciliation and communion with God demands reconciliation and communion with one another. Reconciliation with your brother or sister presumes a prior participation in the life of God, which is why the reconciliation between brothers and sisters is a necessary consequence of communion with God, though not the establishment of it. Right relation with others, then, is understood as a consequence of right relatedness to God, even though a necessary consequence. This is reinforced also by Christ's radicalization of the first and second commandment—"Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, *and* your neighbor as yourself.")

Clement of Rome, as with Paul and the ancient writers before him, carries forward the union between office and action expressed by the word *leitourgia*. In Clements *Epistle to the Corinthians*, *leitourgia* is used in reference to the priestly office, specifically bearing the meaning of the temple priest as one who speaks repentance.²⁵ Clement makes no distinction between the office held and the action done. *Leitourgia* also takes on a more generalized definition of a service done in obedience to God, which is compared with Noah's obedience in building the ark and gathering the animals,²⁶ and even the *liturgy* of the wind as it participates in its proper fashion within the economy of creation.²⁷ Nevertheless, following his

²⁵ Clement of Rome, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," VIII, in James A. Kleist, trans., *The Epistles of St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch*, ed. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe (New York: Newman Press, 1946).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, IX.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, XX. We see this also in Chrysostom, who speaks of the day and the night as *ministers* (λειτουργῶν), who perform their liturgies for the sake of humanity, drawing humanity closer together as a unity. The wild beasts are also liturgists, as they drive men into cities out of fear, forcing humanity to live in solidarity with one another, living peacefully and harmoniously, rather than being eaten alive in the wilderness alone (See Chrysostom, *Homily on the Statutes*, 8.1).

explanation of the wind's *liturgy*, participating in due fashion within the order of creation, Clement goes on to narrow the use of *leitourgia* as the hierarchical offices of all, each having their role in the *liturgy* of Jesus through the *liturgies* prescribed to them. Drawing on Hebrews 10, Clement links λειτουργια with θυσια and προσφερεω, so that the priest is the one who offers the people's sacrifice. Following the logic found in Hebrews, the people so gathered are "consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ," enabling Clement to say that every liturgist, each in his/her order, participates in the *liturgy* Jesus is.²⁸ It is through participation in Jesus' *liturgy* that the Christian is consecrated to God.²⁹ It is worthwhile to include the whole passage here.

Since, therefore, this is evident to all of us, and we have explored the depths of the divine knowledge, we are obliged to carry out in fullest detail what the Master has commanded us to do at stated times. He has ordered the sacrifices to be offered (προσφορας) and the services to be held (λειτουργιας), and this is not in a random and irregular fashion, but at definite times and seasons. He has, moreover, Himself, by His sovereign will determined where and by whom He wants them to be carried out. Thus all things are done religiously, acceptable to His good pleasure, dependent on His will. Those, therefore, that make their offerings at the prescribed times are acceptable and blessed; for, since they comply with the ordinances of the Master, they do not sin. Special functions (λειτουργιαι) are assigned to the high priest; a special office is imposed upon the priests; and special ministrations fall to the Levites. The layman is bound by the rules laid down for the laity. Each of us, brethren, must in his own place endeavor to please God

²⁸ Clement does not say it as explicitly as "Jesus is" the liturgy; however, his articulation of liturgy as synonymous with *office* makes the act-office of Christ as the liturgy he performs a natural claim for Clement.

²⁹ Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, VIII - XLII, especially XL and XLI. Clement reiterates the argument made in Hebrews 10, where it is Christ who is the sacrifice, the one offering, and it is in his liturgy that the Christian participates when they come to offer themselves as a living sacrifice, and it is the bishop who stands as Christ and gathers the people into God's economy.

with a good conscience, reverently taking care not to deviate from the established rule of service (λειτουργιας).³⁰

The liturgies of the bishop, deacon and layman are likened to those of the angels.³¹ It is hereby that Clement links the bishop with Christ. It is Christ's *liturgy* that is now assigned to the bishop to carry on, gathering the offerings of the many into one as acceptable and pleasing to God.³² The offerings of the people are inseparable from the people themselves. When the bishop gathers the gifts of the people, he simultaneously gathers the people, so that what is consecrated and given to God is not merely the people's offering; it is they who are presented *with* the offering (they are what the offering *signifies*).³³ Clement specifically locates the plurality of liturgical activity within the singularity of Christ's liturgical act. As with Ignatius of Antioch, the bishop stands as Christ; it is he who gathers the body, discerning rightly according to each order, making the many offerings of the masses a single, consecrated and blessed offering acceptable to God.

In Ignatius, the bishop is undeniably Christ to the church, to be revered as if we were reverencing Christ. "Plainly... one should look upon the bishop as upon the Lord Himself."³⁴ The bishop is hereby the *οικονομιαν* for the *οικοδεσποτης* (the economist/administrator for the economy/household of the Master).³⁵ He is the master on behalf of *the* Master—God, who administrates the Lord's economy in the terrestrial realm as analogous to its orchestration in the celestial realm, through whom in Christ these realms co-inhere. For Ignatius, then, Christ is the gatherer of the whole world into God, the chief economist if you will, or "captain" as Ignatius says, and the bishop—*επισκοπος*—is the gatherer of the people in Christ, literally the over-seer (*επι*

³⁰ Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, XL-XLI.

³¹ *Ibid.*, XXXVI, again drawing on *Hebrews* (1.10). See also Leviticus 3.5.

³² *Ibid.*, XL. It is in this passage that Clement makes most explicit the ordering of the liturgical economy by Christ, whose services/liturgies are now assigned to the episcopate, and through him are enjoined the offerings to be presented and the services to be performed to the glory of the Lord. See also ICL, XLI.

³³ There is no distinction to be made here between the signified (bread) and the thing-signified (giver). As will be shown later in chapter four, the bread and its donor are inseparable.

³⁴ Ignatius, "Epistle to the Ephesians," VI, in James A. Kleist, trans., *The Epistles of St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch*, ed. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe (New York: Newman Press, 1946).

³⁵ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, VI.

over/above, σκοπος sight/see) of the economy, through whom the peoples' offerings, that is, the people themselves, are conjoined or assimilated to God.³⁶

The Greek meaning of λειτουργία is both carried forth and given new meaning in Jesus of Nazareth. It maintains its emphasis both as sacrifice and donation; however, the meaning is radicalized by the fact that there is only one who can give the gift—Jesus, and his specific form of self-offering now determines the very nature of sacrifice and how a liturgical economy is to be enacted. *Leitourgia* must be a sacrificial offering of the self to God, which is consequentially beneficial to others. Perhaps the clearest example of this is found in *Similitude 5* of the Shepherd of Hermas, in his explication on fasting.

After having done what is prescribed, on the day of your fast do not taste anything except bread and water. Compute the total expense for the food you would have eaten on the day on which you intended to keep a fast and give it to a widow, an orphan, or someone in need. In this way you will become humble in soul, so that the beneficiary of your humility may fill his soul and pray to the Lord for you. If you perform your fast, then, in the way I have just commanded, your sacrifice (θυσία) will be acceptable in the sight of God and this fast will be entered in the account [in your favor]; a service (λειτουργία) so performed is beautiful, joyous, and acceptable in the sight of the Lord.³⁷

Fasting alone would not be “enough” in this light, for if a person fasted and kept the money that would have afforded her meals, there would be a gain involved in the sacrificial act, which would not fully participate in the self-emptying of God on the cross. (It is important to note how Paul’s emphasis on the service is not *to* the other, even though it is *for* the other. It is a necessary consequence that service *to* God is *for* the benefit of others; however, it remains a consequence of the liturgical action, not what determines the liturgical action.) Fasting—abstaining from eating—does not mean that food is wasted, says Hermas. It means that it is denied by one for the sake of being

³⁶ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, VI.

³⁷ Shepherd of Hermas, “Parables,” V.iii, in Francis Xavier Glimm, Joseph Marie-Felix Marique, and Gerald Groveland Walsh, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1969).

eaten by another. In this way is fasting likened to Jesus' *liturgy*, whose offering is always *to* the glory of the Father and *for the life of the world*. A gift given to another does not imply, on the basis of something given, that it is a mimesis of Jesus' self-offering; however, an offering to God does entail that it be sacrificial in nature with the consequence of benefiting another. Only when the offering *to* God is truly self-emptying in this way shall the person receive the blessing that only God can give. The radicalization of *leitourgia* is found in the mimetic offering of *one* as living-sacrifice, whereby God is glorified, the *other* receives the benefits, and the offerer is drawn into communion with God. This is how the other is drawn into the procession and return of God from and to himself.

When the gifts are gathered as an offering to God, they are then distributed to those in need, be they the poor or apostle. It is here that *leitourgia* comes into direct relation with *κοινωνια* (a gift jointly contributed, as exhibiting proof of joint fellowship). Foreshadowed in Paul's articulation is the functioning of the medieval guild system with its inherent liturgical nature for sustaining a society of reciprocity. Paul describes this fellowship in his letter to the Philippians, where the gifts of the Macedonians and Achaians bind them together in the fellowship of Christ with the Christians in Jerusalem. But such *κοινωνια* is never unilateral for Paul; it is inherently reciprocal. The *sharing/εκοινωνησεν* is in *giving/δοσεως* and *receiving/λημψεως*.³⁸ Nowhere in Paul's letters is this shared *liturgy* more explicit than in his second letter to the church in Corinth. "Through us," says Paul, the *liturgy* of the Corinthians will be a "thanksgivings to God,"³⁹ and it is through their *liturgy* that *koinonia* with other Christians is possible, which glorifies God.⁴⁰ This *koinonia*, however, is a mimesis of the "indescribable gift" of God in Christ—the Holy Spirit—who simultaneously realizes with the Christian community the *fellowship/shared life* in God through the same Spirit.⁴¹

³⁸ Philippians 4:15.

³⁹ 2 Corinthians 9:11-12.

⁴⁰ 2 Corinthians 13.

⁴¹ 2 Corinthians 13:13.

In Marcel Mauss' "The Gift," he shows how giving has historically defined the nature of human relations within a local community and differentiated bodies of people.⁴² All giving occurs in and through the fellowship of those who participate in the social body or the fellowship between social bodies. This is due to the nature of a gift. A gift is never to be understood as a thing that bears meaning apart from its giver or recipient. In giving a gift, "one gives away what is in reality a part of one's nature and substance, while to receive something is to receive a part of someone's spiritual essence."⁴³ The gift creates a shared life between giver and recipient. Fellowship, however, is contingent upon reciprocity. The offering is not enough to bind the two parties together. The gift must be received. If the gift is denied, it is as though the would-be recipient has declared war on the giver.⁴⁴

This is comparable with the parable of the man who held a banquet for his son⁴⁵ where none who were invited came. By not attending the banquet, all those invited were not simply refusing to attend a meal at the home of the one married or his father, each were denying fellowship with the one who extended the invitation to the banquet. The ancient gift-economy illustrated by Mauss is extremely helpful in order to discern how fellowship between persons or bodies of people is established and sustained, especially as it relates to the development of liturgy throughout church history. The tangible gifts shared between people are not understood to be inert objects, but as endowed with the spirit of the giver, and by receiving it the recipient enters into fellowship with the giver.⁴⁶ As with Augustine, the *thing* is inseparable from the *thing-signified*. What is signified in the gift is the giver herself, which binds or separates the two persons or communities, depending on the reception or denial by the receiving party. Irenaeus points this out in regard to the widow's mite, who in casting her two coins into the treasury casts also herself.

⁴² Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York: Norton, 1967), 2-3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁵ Matthew 22.

⁴⁶ Mauss, *The Gift*, 48.

The oblation of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him; not that He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that *he who offers* is himself glorified in *what he does offer*, if his gift be accepted. For by the gift both honour and affection are shown forth towards the King; and the Lord, wishing us to offer it in all simplicity and innocence, did express Himself thus: “Therefore, when thou offerest thy gift upon the altar, and shalt remember that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then return and offer thy gift.” We are bound, therefore, to offer to God the first-fruits of His creation, as Moses also says, “Thou shalt not appear in the presence of the Lord thy God empty;” so that man, being accounted as grateful, by those things in which he has shown his gratitude, may receive that honour which flows from Him. And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside; for there were both oblations there [among the Jews], and there are oblations here [among the Christians]. Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, too, in the Church: but the species alone has been changed, inasmuch as the offering is now made, not by slaves, but by freemen. For the Lord is [ever] one and the same; but the character of a servile oblation is peculiar [to itself], as is also that of freemen, in order that, by the very oblations, the indication of liberty may be set forth. For with Him there is nothing purposeless, nor without signification, nor without design. And for this reason they (the Jews) had indeed the tithes of their goods consecrated to Him, but those who have received liberty set aside all their possessions for the Lord’s purposes, bestowing joyfully and freely not the less valuable portions of their property, since they have the hope of

better things [hereafter]; as that poor widow acted who cast all her living into the treasury of God.⁴⁷

The widow, in casting all her living into the treasury, has given also herself to God, entirely; she is glorified in what she has offered, because she has received the Gift to now *be* gift. In her poverty she becomes wealthy, because she has emptied herself to God's glory, and is now the dwelling place of the Lord.

Koinonia for the Christian community becomes distinct, however, because of the gathering of many offerings into a unified offering. A gift cannot be given in isolation or unilaterally. All giving in a Christian community is an extension of divine generosity and a drawing into absolute reciprocity. Christ has given the only gift that can be given. All other gifts either participate in or deny the kenotic gift of the Son to the Father. The willed, self-emptying and slave-hood of the Son is *the* Gift; it is the action by which the whole of creation is united as a single offering to the Father. This willed, self-emptying is the *liturgy* of the Son, and fellowship *in* Christ is inseparable from participation in the liturgical action *of* Christ. *Koinonia* is exacted by the liturgical action. The Father gives the Son to the world and the Son gathers the world into himself as a consecrated—assimilated—offering in his return to the Father. This procession and return is sustained by the shared life of the Spirit now made available through the church. Through the *mysteries* the human is initiated and gathered into this procession and return, whereby she becomes a vessel of the holy,⁴⁸—she becomes *mystery*—being co-opted, as it were, into the divine drama.

Ambrose, perhaps better than any other, draws together the essence of *koinonia* (or in his case *communicatio*) as the manifestation of the *liturgy* of the Son.

So the Father gave His Son, and the Son Himself gave Himself. Charity is preserved, and devoutness is not harmed, for there can be no harm to devoutness, where there is no hardship in giving. He gave Him who was willing; He gave Him who

⁴⁷ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.xviii.1-2, (ANF)

⁴⁸ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, XII.

offered Himself; surely the Father did not give the Son for punishment but for grace. If you inquire into the merit of the deed question the word ‘devoutness.’ The vessel of election clearly shows this unity of divine charity, for both Father gave the Son, and the Son Himself gave Himself. The Father gave, who ‘spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all’ (Romans 8:32). Of the Son also he says: ‘Who delivered Himself for me’ (Galatians 11:20)... [As] the Father gave the Son, and the Son Himself gave Himself, learn that the Spirit also gave Him. For it is written: ‘Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil’ (Matthew 4:1). So the Spirit, too, loved the Son of God and gave Him... Moreover, it is manifest that there is fellowship with the Father and with the Son, for it is written: ‘Our fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ’; and elsewhere: ‘The communication of the Holy Ghost with you all’ (1 John 1:3; 2 Corinthians 13:13)....⁴⁹

Offerer, offering, and the act of offering converge in the giving of the Son, which is the fullness of the Godhead—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—who gives *himself*—the whole of Divinity—establishing *koinonia* with all humanity through the receiving of *the Gift*, as giver and recipient are fused together in ecstatic, unconfused union of love.

Koinonia with Christ, therefore, is the telos of humanity, which occurs by sharing in his sufferings and death (Phil. 3:10). This can only mean that the gift received through the *mysteria*, which incorporates the Christian into the Triune Communion, is now her gift to endlessly give. A gift can be given, because *the Gift* has been given. By receiving this gift the human becomes bound to God and, consequentially, to neighbor, for with the gift comes the fullness of the giver. The human is bound through Christ’s *liturgy*, as he has gathered humanity into himself in obedience to the Father. Being so gathered Christians now participate as an assimilated body that labors together, strives

⁴⁹ Ambrose, *Theological and Dogmatic Works*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, vol. 44, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington: Catholic University of American Press, 1963), 82.

in company together, sleeps together, awakens together, as liturgists of God.⁵⁰ It is in this shared fellowship with others in Christ that the human exhibits the likeness of the Triune God.

Once again, however, it is the primacy of the bishop that comes to the fore, as it is his liturgical office as *christotokos* through which God deigns to continue the ministry of reconciliation. Nevertheless, as Ignatius and Cyprian remind us, the singular *liturgy* of the church is a conjoined *liturgy* of the whole body, whereby the bishop can only perform his office as bishop to the extent that the lay person performs her office as lay person, and vice versa.⁵¹ Office and action, as in the ancient world, are in Christ inseparable. The hierarchical administration of the liturgical economy is a division of labor, not a partitioning of classes. Just as the bishop makes the people available to God, likewise do the people make God available to the bishop. A logic of reciprocity is embedded within the action. By necessity of her communion with God, the Christian must be in fellowship with Christ's holy Church, through its bishops.⁵²

The nature of sacrifice in the ancient world and how this is transformed by Christ is of utmost importance for discerning how *liturgy* is to be understood, especially given the inherent nature of *liturgy* as a *self-emptying* of God and assimilation of humanity—the absolute refusal of the Creator to live apart from creation. The form is anticipated in Israel, as Hebrew sacrifice presumes an a priori relation to God, not as something that establishes the relation. God's action is always primary; human action is always a response to God's act.

In the world of ancient Greece, offering sacrifices to the gods were a complex affair bound together with deep rooted customs and surrounded by prayers that made the reciprocal relation between Greek and god sensible.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ignatius, *The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp*, VI (ANF).

⁵¹ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, I.6; Cyprian, "Letter XVI," in *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, trans. G. W. Clarke, vol. I (New York: Newman Press, 1984); see also Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 117.

⁵² Cyprian, "Letter LI," in *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, trans. G. W. Clarke, vol. II (New York: Newman Press, 1984).

⁵³ Simon Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 1-69; Robert Parker, *On Greek Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 64-102; and Brooke

Among other things, the primary role of sacrifice for the ancient Greek was to remind the god(s) invoked that they were the offerers' god(s). This meant that if the god expected continual sacrifices from the offerer the god better ensure the well being of the offerer.⁵⁴ If the god did not save the life of the offerer in battle it would effectively put an end to the sacrifices made to the god by that person or people. The god, therefore, had dog in the fight, as it were, depending on the pleasure derived from the sacrifice.⁵⁵ The expectation, however, was surely that the god would respond in kind to the offerer(s), which was the purpose of accompanying prayers in the ritual offering.⁵⁶ Without the accompanying prayer the god would not know exactly what the offerer hoped to receive from the offering.⁵⁷ There is no hint, says Simon Pulleyn, that the Greek gods were omniscient.⁵⁸ They needed clear instruction from the offerer how they should reciprocate, aside from general mindfulness of the offerers' flourishing.

Robert Parker has shown that the sacrificial engagement between Greeks and gods was integral to the cohesion of the social body.⁵⁹ Like Greek heroes, the gods were offered sacrifices because of the benefits procured in the present.⁶⁰ It also met a distinctly human need for contact with the invisible world humans knew to exist.⁶¹ The primary way to gain access to this unseen world, however, was through animal sacrifices, which were themselves understood to be "self-offerings" to the god(s)—vicarious offerings.⁶² Animal sacrifices also evidence a relationship that is initiated by the offerer, rather

Holmes, *The Symptom and the Subject: The Emergence of the Physical Body in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 92-95.

⁵⁴ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 13-17.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7. As Simon Pulleyn has shown, the relation between the Greek and her god was, while reciprocal, essentially one of give and taken. "The feeling that the relationship between men and gods was essentially one of give-and-take through sacrifice and prayer is very clear from the frequent association in our surviving texts of the verbs *θυειν* ('to sacrifice') and *ευχεσθαι* ('to pray')."

⁵⁶ Robert Parker, *On Greek Religion*, x.

⁵⁷ Pulleyn, 14.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Parker, 264.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 224-264.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Holmes, *The Symptom and the Subject*, 185-193.

than the god.⁶³ The relation is reciprocal, even if ‘give-and-take,’ and while the initial engagement may not be from the human it remains the sacrifice that sets the stage for the god to return in kind.⁶⁴ In Homer’s *Iliad*, Chryses recalls to Apollo, after the failed attempt to free his daughter from the hands of Agamemnon, to remember his sacrifices and “in exchange” avenge his daughter.

Hear me, you of the silver bow, who protect Chryses and holy Cilla and rule with might over Tenedos, if ever I have roofed over for you a pleasing temple or burnt up for you fat thighs of bulls or goats, fulfill for me this wish: may the Danaans pay for my tears by your arrows.⁶⁵

Here Chryses makes a prayer, one that he assimilates with past sacrifices to Apollo in his holy temple. The animal sacrifice hereby serves as a sort of binding contract between god and human. This should not be understood in the typical way one might understand a contract today, however; rather, it is that which binds together the reciprocal relation between the two parties. The offerer obliges herself in the offering and the god returns the obligation by receiving the offering.⁶⁶

This transaction-like reciprocity runs markedly opposed to the form of sacrifice and prayer we find among ancient Israel. As Simon Pulleyn has argued, the crucial difference for the Hebrew is that the covenant relation between human and God is the fact that the relation is instigated by God.⁶⁷ Additionally, whereas *χαρις* is an obliged return for the Greek god for YHWH it is definitely not.⁶⁸ As for the sacrifice the offerings and activities of the Hebrews are responsive rather than antecedent.⁶⁹

⁶³ Jan N. Bremmer and Andrew Erskine, eds., *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 90.

⁶⁴ Pulleyn, 1-38.

⁶⁵ Homer, *Iliad*, 1.37ff.

⁶⁶ Pulleyn, 16-17.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 21. As Simon Pulleyn has shown, there is a world of difference between Hebrew prayer and the prayer of Chryses or any other Homeric hero who expects his god to pay back one good turn with another.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

The most notable Hebrew sacrifice that comes to mind when is the story of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham is told by God to offer his son—his only son—Isaac as a burnt-offering.⁷⁰ This test of faith is often read solely from the vantage point of God demanding the only son of Abraham. What is often overlooked in the assessment is the fact that God first gives Isaac to Abraham as a gift. Isaac is the offering that God has given, not the other way around. Abraham has nothing of his own to give to God; he can only offer to God that which God has given him to offer. When a ram is offered in Isaac's stead, it remains God who has provided the sacrificial offering.

The *burnt-offering* in ancient Israel is a thank-offering, whereby the offerer and God are united by the offering. In the case of Abraham, it is presumed that union with God will be made available to Abraham through the sacrifice of Isaac. Other forms of offering within Judaism are *peace-offerings*, *meal offerings*, and the *sin and guilt offerings*.⁷¹ The *peace-offerings* were offerings of thanksgiving. These offerings were given in response to God's redemption of Israel, and in anticipation of the coming restoration of Israel. *Meal offerings* were sacrifices made from the fruits of the land, which had been given to Israel by God. A *sin offering* was a sacrifice made as reparation for sins committed in ignorance. The *sin offering* acknowledges a failure to properly participate in the life God has given to his people. *Guilt offerings* differ from *sin offerings* to the extent that the sin was committed knowingly and the sacrifice was meant to be expiatory—that is, the animal sacrificed was symbolic of the person offering. Through the animal's death the sinful life of the offerer that he might live holy to God. The sacrifice served to repair the covenantal relation established by God with his people. The sin and guilt offerings are not efforts to gain or regain favor with God, but are meant to mourn the fractured relationship between God and his people, who favors his people even when they sin against him. What is important to grasp here, is the initiating factor of the covenant. For the Greek, a covenant with a god is established by the sacrifice of a people, whereas for the Hebrews, the covenant

⁷⁰ Genesis 22.

⁷¹ See Max Thurian, *The Eucharistic Memorial* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960), for a complete discussion on Hebrew sacrifice. See also Jacob Neusner, *The Four Stages of Rabbinic Judaism* (London: Routledge, 1999), 86-91.

is the gift of the God who comes before, not after, the human. The sacrificial offerings of the Hebrews are in response to the gifts of YHWH, who creates *ex nihilo*.

Isaac stands as paradigmatic for Jewish understandings of sacrificial offering.⁷² God's gift precedes all forms of giving. "All things come from you, [O God,] and of your own have we given you."⁷³ God's giving, however, anticipates a return; and it is the return that seals the union with God. In offering Isaac to be sacrificed, Abraham is offering himself, who confesses through knowledge of God's prevenience that "God will provide." God has provided Isaac, beyond all biological certainty. By returning Isaac to God, Abraham is drawn into the fullness of the divine economy—gathering Isaac into this same economy—wherein all necessary means of giving are provided.⁷⁴ The test of Abraham is whether or not he trusts that all things truly come from God, as opposed to human ingenuity.⁷⁵ God is the sole giver of gifts; and it is only God who can receive *himself*. Abraham's giving and receiving are to be understood, therefore, as a participation in the giving and receiving of God from and to *himself*.

Within Judaism sacrifice takes on a true *leitourgia*.⁷⁶ Abraham's offering of Isaac is a liturgical act. Abraham informs those who have traveled to the land of Moriah with him and Isaac to stay behind, that "the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you."⁷⁷ The procession up the mountaintop by Abraham with Isaac, is Abraham's

⁷² See Yael S. Feldman, *Glory and Agony: Isaac's Sacrifice and National Narrative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

⁷³ 1 Chronicles 29.14.

⁷⁴ Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher and Bruce Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 439-473. Flesher and Chilton also explore how the story of Isaac is transformed with Judaism over time, whereby the passive Isaac becomes seen more and more as the willing self-offering.

⁷⁵ Again, this later becomes for Judaism the test of Isaac as well. In the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, to which Flesher and Chilton draw our attention, it is Isaac who says to Abraham, "Bind me well, so that I do not jerk convulsively from pain of my soul, and I be thrust into the pit of destruction, and there be found a blemish in your offering" (465). No longer is it merely the faithfulness of Abraham, but the obedience of Isaac helps to ensure the purity of Abraham's offering. See also Jon Douglas Levenson, *Abraham between Torah and Gospel* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2011), 56.

⁷⁶ Wout Jac. van Bekkum, "The Aqedah and its Interpretations in Midrash and Piyyut," in Edward Noort and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 83-95.

⁷⁷ Genesis 22.5.

offertory procession with the gift God has given him to give—Isaac. Nevertheless, the gift of Isaac is transformed by God’s giving of the ram, and Isaac returns to Abraham radiating the glory of the Lord. It is upon this liturgical backdrop that the cross is staged. The notions of sacrifice found in the ancient world of the Greeks is turned on its head, while the Hebrew liturgical offerings find their eternal rest. Christ, in his procession before the world, ushers in a complete “transfiguration” of the sacrificial offering of a people, locating all sacrifice and offering within his singular *liturgy*, foreshadowed in the liturgy of Abraham and Isaac.

When we come to Paul, what we find in his letters is a clear articulation that the sacrificial offerings to God and one another, participate in Jesus’ *liturgy*, which is his obedience to the Father. The Son’s *liturgy* is the gathering together of the whole world, sanctifying the whole of creation, which makes the *liturgies* of humans acceptable and pleasing to the Father, who in turn blesses and returns human offerings *for the life of the world*, uniting heaven and earth in the gift of the Holy Spirit, making humankind’s continual offering to God possible, and God’s continual return available. This *liturgical drama* between God and Creation effectually incorporates God’s people into God’s economy through *koinonia* in Christ’s self-emptying, sacrificial offering.⁷⁸ The Son is the ultimate *Gift* of the Father. In receiving the Son, the human is conjoined to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Father receives the human with the Son and returns to humanity the Holy Spirit, who makes continual fellowship in the love of the Father for the Son and obedience of the Son to the Father possible—a glorious cycle of procession and return of God from and to *himself*. To receive the Son is simultaneously to give oneself to the Father. Receiving a gift, as seen earlier, is to receive the one who gives the gift; it is to bind oneself, through the same reception, to the donor. *Liturgy*—one’s sacrificial offering—is, then, a participation in the faithful obedience of the Son. Through the Holy Spirit one enters into the mutual, self-emptying reciprocal love that is the Triune Communion.

⁷⁸ Philippians 3.10.

In the same manner that God has given Isaac to Abraham, so has the Father given the Son to all. Likewise, as Isaac is demanded by God to be offered in return, so is the Son exacted, and God provides. The ram is given for Isaac, as bread and wine are given for the faithful. Having received Christ through the Spirit the Christian is now bound to the Father. Return to the Father is hereby demanded, and God provides. Because God provides the offering, the continuation of reciprocal love between Creator and creation is made available. In offering bread and wine as symbols of the living sacrifice Christians *are*, God receives the offerings, gathered as they are into and along with Christ, and returns them endowed with the fullness of his power and grace, his body and blood. In consuming the flesh and blood of God, the Christian is consumed—incorporated through the *corpus mysticum*, to become the *corpus verum*—a body that reaches beyond all spatial barriers to unite both seen and unseen. The Body of Christ is then sent out into the world in its many parts; *and is sent out to return*.

In the book of Hebrews, the nature of sacrifice and how it participates in the liturgical drama of God is made most explicit. “Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”⁷⁹ The sacrificial offering here not only takes on a “spiritual” connotation—that is, it is a participation in the sacrifice of Jesus, not an animal being slain or the like, but most importantly the author unites sacrifice and offering with the liturgical action of Jesus as High Priest, who gathers creation into himself as a single offering in its return to the Father. *Liturgy* and sacrifice go hand in hand. The liturgies of a people are analogous to the divine *liturgy* Jesus is, inasmuch as one participates in the singular, self-emptying, and sacrificial offering of the Son to the Father.

The liturgical sacrifice offered by the community to God, because it participates by way of analogy in the *liturgy* of Jesus, must be a pure offering. This *pure offering* is directly linked to the Eucharist—the spiritual sacrifice. The bread of the Eucharistic offering, however, is inseparable from those making the offering. Both Cyril and Irenaeus are explicit about the offering of the community and the offering of Christ as being indistinguishable, whereby

⁷⁹ Hebrews 13.15.

the various liturgies of the people participate in the one true offering. As Cyril puts it:

After this the bishop says: ‘Holy things for the holy.’ The offerings are holy, because they have received the descent of the Holy Spirit, and you are holy too because you have been granted the Holy Spirit; thus the holy things are appropriate for holy people. Then you say: ‘One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ.’ For truly there is one who is holy, holy by nature; for though we are holy, we are not so by nature, but by participation and discipline and prayer. After this you hear the cantor to a sacred melody encouraging you to receive the holy mysteries. ‘Taste and see’, he sings, ‘the goodness of the Lord’ (Ps 33.9; 34.8). Do not rely on the judgment of your physical throat but on that of unhesitating faith. For what you taste is not bread and wine but Christ’s body and blood, which they symbolize. So when you approach do not come with your wrists extended or your fingers parted. Make your left hand a throne for your right, which is about to receive the King, and receive Christ’s body in the hollow of your hand, replying ‘Amen’. Before you consume it, carefully bless your eyes with the touch of the holy body, watching not to lose any part of it; for if you do lose any of it, *it is as if it were part of your own body that is being lost.*⁸⁰

As for Irenaeus, what Christians offer is the “beginning of the new creation’s harvest—the humanity of Christ, in which the deification of human nature is perfected and offered to us.”⁸¹ To participate, therefore, as mentioned above in the gift of the widow’s mite, is to be gathered into the *kenotic* love of God. It is a love that humans are incapable of enacting on their own. Humankind cannot, as it were, love God. All love is a participation in triune reciprocity—humanity’s share in God’s fullness. The Spirit, as Cyril puts forth, enables one to participate in the offering—Christ, in the self-emptying of God on the

⁸⁰ Edward Yarnold, trans., *Cyril of Jerusalem* (London: Routledge, 2000), 186.

⁸¹ Rowan Williams, *Eucharistic Sacrifice: The Roots of a Metaphor* (Nottinghamshire: Grove Books, 1982), 10.

cross. Sacrifice, hereby understood, cannot be made by humanity. Only God can sacrifice. Only God can suffer. Only God can drink the cup. All sacrificial action, then, is participatory. Indeed, all action in the proper sense is Christ.⁸²

Furthermore, as found in the *Didache*, following Jesus' teaching on bringing gifts to the altar,⁸³ the established relationship of God with humanity requires right-relatedness within the community in order to participate in the life-giving sacrifice of the Eucharist. The sacrifice is profaned if there is division involved in the one offering her gift.⁸⁴ Into the latter first and early second century, there is a clear continuation and linkage between the sacrificial offering, the gift, and the *liturgy* itself that is identified with the offerer. The *Didache* not only locates sacrificial offering in the liturgical action, but also connects it with the breaking of bread that occurs when the community is gathered. The breaking of bread is how God makes himself available to his people, but reconciliation, which is revealed through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus, is not somehow conected by divine fiat; rather, reconciliation is the order of the table. Communion with God requires reconciliation with neighbor as a necessary consequence for being assimilated to the eternal Son. All of this finds itself once again in the midst of the hierarchical *liturgy* of the people. It is for all the reasons above that it is found in the *Didache* to "appoint, the, for yourselves, bishop and deacons worthy of the Lord, me gentle and not money-loving and truthful and tested; for to you they likewise serve (unpaid) the λειτουργουσι (the unpaid public service) of the prophet-teachers."⁸⁵ In the *Didache* hierarchy is brought to the fore. It is necessary to have faithful leaders who stand as representatives of and to God, those who will gather the gifts of a people together as a single offering, so that a people do in fact participate in the fullness of divine power and love. The office of the bishop is clearly addressed:

⁸² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 43-48.

⁸³ Matthew 5.

⁸⁴ Aaron Milavec, trans., *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis, and Commentary* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), XIV.ii.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, XV.i.

You, therefore, O bishops, are to your people priests and Levites, ministering (λειτουργησαντας) to the holy tabernacle, the holy Catholic Church; who stand at the altar of the Lord your God, and *offer to Him reasonable and unbloody sacrifices through Jesus the great High Priest*. You are to the laity prophets, rulers, governors, and kings; the mediators between God and His faithful people, who receive and declare His word, well acquainted with the Scriptures. Ye are the voice of God, and witnesses of His will, who bear the sins of all, and intercede for all... For you imitate Christ the Lord; and as He “bare the sins of us all upon the tree” at His crucifixion, the innocent for those who deserved punishment, so also you ought to make the sins of the people your own... As you are patterns for others, so have you Christ for your pattern.⁸⁶

The bishop, as Christ to the church, gathers together the living sacrifices, the people, conjoining through the power of the Holy Spirit the body to its head, Christ, as a single, pure and acceptable offering to the Father. The bishop stands as chief liturgist, analogous to Christ the one true liturgist, with whom the many liturgies of the people—the many living sacrifices—converge into one polyphonic unity in God.

The harmonious participation in the cruciform *liturgy* of the gathered community enables the human to realize her nature as created in the divine image. It is the Word—the flesh of God speaking—that brings before the whole world the truth of its createdness.

And then, again, this Word was manifested when the Word of God was made man, assimilating Himself to man, and man to Himself, so that by means of his resemblance to the Son, man might become precious to the Father. For in times long past, it was *said* that man was created after the image of God, but it was not [actually] *shown*; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created, wherefore also he did easily lose the similitude. When, however, the Lord of God

⁸⁶ *Constitution of the Holy Apostles*, XXV (ANF).

became flesh, He confirmed both these: for He both showed forth the image truly, since He became Himself what was His image; and He re-established the similitude after a sure manner, by assimilating man to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word.⁸⁷

It is humankind's resemblance to the Son, through participation in the *liturgy* Jesus is—the convergence of office and action, that is, the union of God and creation⁸⁸—that assimilates humanity to the Divine. This assimilation is a continuation of the sacrificial system of the Hebrews, for the point of departure from Hebraic understandings of sacrifice in the early church does not contradict the prevenient acts of God. It completes the sacrificial law because the sacrificial offering not only comes from God but *is* God incarnate. The suffering and death of God on the cross makes participation in resurrection available to humanity. By bearing in her body the sufferings and death of the Spoken Word of the Father the human is resurrected with the Son to become Son. Sacrifice as spiritually abstract is made unintelligible. Sacrificial action is a person, and his name is Jesus. To participate, then, is to *become*.

II

It is important now back up and discern the overarching context of Paul's employment of *leitourgia* as evoking one who gathers the offering of the people, mediating *koinonia* in the Spirit. It is Paul's testimony that he is an icon of Christ, seeking *koinonia* in, by, and through Christ's sufferings and death, that he might have *koinonia* with Christ in his resurrection.⁸⁹ God has hereby made him an administrator/οικονομους of the sacraments/μυστηριον of God.⁹⁰ It is Paul's arbitration of God's *economy*, made intelligible by his enslavement to Christ, that incorporates others into the *economy*. Though free

⁸⁷ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V.xvi (ANF).

⁸⁸ This is later expressed by Maximus in *The Church's Mystagogy*, I, solidly keeping with Irenaeus. "[Holy] Church bears the imprint and image of God since it has the same *activity* as he does by imitation and in figure." See George C. Berthold, trans., *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 186.

⁸⁹ Philippians 3.

⁹⁰ 1 Corinthians 4.

from all, with Christ he made himself a slave to all, as this is the fabric of God's οἰκονομία.⁹¹ *Leitourgia*, the apostolic office and service of gathering together the people as an offering to God, is what makes humankind's entrance into the Triune economy possible, which is a participation in the self-emptying of God in Christ made available through the *mysteries—the sacraments*, whereby one, as offering, is endowed with grace. Paul's *liturgy*, then, is his apostolic office of mediating *the economy* of God.

Christ, according to Paul, is both *oikonomia* and *oikonomos*. He is economy par excellence, the administrator of the economy he himself is. Paul uses *Oikonomia* in his letter to the Ephesians to describe the totality of the plan of salvation made-manifest in Jesus of Nazareth. Being gathered into this economy removes all divisions between giver and recipient. It is the conflation of giving poles into one that Christ's mediation through the sacraments makes possible. The Giver becomes the Gift, and the recipient comes to bear the Spirit of the Giver through the Gift, so to become gift.

When Aristotle uses the term *oikonomia* it refers directly to the administration and management of domestic life, the regulation of which is essential for the well-ordered society.⁹² Following Aristotle, the use of *oikonomia* is found in reference to arrangements made concerning the sick, political administration, service in the home, etc., all having to do with the administration of each human organization. Each dimension of economic thought will come full-circle in the church fathers in unprecedented fashion; it will come to bear the distinct mark of Christ's incarnation and the unfolding of the plan of salvation as *oikonomia*. For the Greeks, *oikonomia* comes to designate the whole order of persons within society. In general, *oikonomia* for the Classical Greek implies a functional organization of an order that has some form of profit, material or celestial, in mind.⁹³ As we see in the early fathers of the church, this meaning is carried forth but refined such that it typifies the ordering of humanity to the liturgical action of Jesus. Economics, then, is to

⁹¹ 1 Corinthians 9.

⁹² Aristotle, "Economics," II.1, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁹³ See Marie-José Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy: The Byzantine Origins of the Contemporary Imaginary* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), for a complete exposition on the usage of *oikonomia* in the early fathers.

be understood as a science of relations and relative terms, but is not to be mistaken for a relative concept. It simultaneously renders a service and takes account of the very idea of service. It is, as it were, the logic of the active order itself. The Classical *oikonomia*, then, implies the ordering of the plurality of liturgies into a unity, in order to serve the goals at hand in the best way possible. It is this economical logic one finds in the explication of *leitourgia* by Paul and the early fathers. The whole of the economy—the plan of salvation that is Christ—is the *gathering* of persons who, being assimilated as *gift* with *the Gift*—Christ, bear in their bodies the self-dispossession of God, which is their participation in *liturgy*—the fullness of God’s power and life. *Liturgy*, hereby understood, is its own end. It is the procession and return of God from and to himself, made-manifest in Jesus of Nazareth.

For Paul, *oikonomia* bespeaks the totality of the divine plan of salvation through the incarnate Lord. In Paul, as aforesaid, Christ is both *oikonomia* and *oikonomos*, because he is salvation qua salvation and the unfolding thereof through incarnation, death and resurrection. As Paul states in his letter to the Ephesians:

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as *the economy* for the fullness of time, to *gather* up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.⁹⁴

Paul then pulls together the radical, participatory nature of the divine economy.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household (οἰκεος) of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together

⁹⁴ Ephesians 1.7-10.

spiritually into a dwelling place (κατοικητηριον) for God. This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—for surely you have already heard of the *economy* of God’s grace that was given me for you....⁹⁵

It follows then that the divine economy is the body of Christ and the building up (οικοδομην) of this body on earth. This household is, however, all encompassing, such that even the earthly authorities are *liturgists* of God.⁹⁶ Nothing is outside the economy of God, and all, in its own way, participates in the administration of this economy, whether positively or negatively.⁹⁷

It is this liturgical economy that Paul refers to throughout his writings, illustrated most clearly in his letter to the Galatians where he says, “I have been crucified *with* Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me....”⁹⁸ The force of this statement comes from the logic of the liturgical action of Jesus, who, by his incarnation, death and resurrection, identifies the specific nature of the Divine Economy. The new nature the human *puts on* in her baptism is the death and resurrection of Jesus, which brings about, through the one Spirit, the new life of participation in the economy of God.⁹⁹

Irenaeus likewise presses the reciprocal nature of this economy exemplified in Christ. Giving is not an exchange of goods with the divine, as if humankind had something God lacked; rather, it is the action through which one enters into the reciprocal love God is. Through human reception of the heavenly reality—the Good—earth and heaven touch, to the glory of God *for the life of the world*.

For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so

⁹⁵ Ephesians 2.19 – 3.2.

⁹⁶ Romans 13.6.

⁹⁷ This understanding of “all things” in their participatory relation, either positively or negatively, will be teased out further in chapter three with Maximus Confessor.

⁹⁸ Galatians 2.19-20.

⁹⁹ Ephesians 4.

also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity. Now we make offering to Him, not as though He stood in need of it, but rendering thanks for His gift, and thus sanctifying what has been created... As, therefore, He does not stand in need of these [liturgies], yet does desire that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful; so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of oblations, although He stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God: thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission. The altar, then, is in heaven (for towards that place are our prayers and oblations directed); the temple likewise [is there], as John says in the Apocalypse, "And the temple of God was opened:" the tabernacle also: "For, behold," He says, "the tabernacle of God, in which He will dwell with men."¹⁰⁰

There is no distinction made between the church's offering and Christ's offering in the Eucharist. In receiving *the* Gift—Christ, Christians become gift, adding nothing to God, yet becoming gods through the Spirit. Christians come to possess the fullness of God's power and life through their very self-dispossession, having emptied themselves with Christ, to become, in the words of Chrysostom, "little christs."

God himself, in trinity of Persons and unity of Substance is the model of every economy, and the Son is the eternal event of this economy, who assimilates time—human action—to himself through his *liturgy*. Though *free from all*, God in Jesus of Nazareth has bound himself *to all*, extending the invitation for humanity to be equally bound. In receiving the self-offering of Christ, the human is consequently obliged to *be* a self-offering to God, *for* others. Here is realized the radical, participatory nature of the liturgical economy, whereby all sacrifice and suffering, all gifts and offering, and all

¹⁰⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.xviii.5-6 (ANF).

human fellowship between persons and God exists within the eternal *Liturgy* God is—the Divine Economy.

III

The commonplace translation of *leitourgia* as “the work of the people,”¹⁰¹ creates a chasm between the liturgy enacted by a people and the *Liturgy* that Jesus is in himself. In an immanent fashion the human is dislocated from the action of the One who has given a singular gift, in whose giving the church catholic participates. *Leitourgia* is the sacrificial action of one capable of sacrifice, which gathers a people together in an economy they otherwise could not enter. Within the Divine Economy, this capacity for sacrificial offering is singular. There is but one Gift, the Son.

The modern emphasis of *leitourgia* as “the work of the people,” or the “people’s work,” dislocates the *gift* from the *giver*, so that a thing has meaning *in itself* without reference to the thing-signified. The movement from *liturgy* as a person’s sacrificial donation or action for the public good to *liturgy* as the “people’s work” problematizes, with regard to Christianity, the participatory nature of the terrestrial in the celestial and, on a very basic level, the person’s participation in the good of the body polis. The irony, here, is that the more the work of a people is emphasized the less meaningful is the work, for it is stripped from the singular action—the *liturgy* of Christ—whose liturgical action alone gives meaning. This is but a short distance from the church as governor over the spiritual via the material, e.g. indulgences. That is, the reign of the church no longer participates in the reign of Christ from his throne in heaven, but exercises ecclesial authority as a substitute for, not analogous to, the reign of Christ. The “people’s work” presumes a capacity to offer, making *liturgy*—the actual service of worship itself, nothing more than a system of ideas, an epistemological severing of act and being. Language can complicate matters here, but the point to be made is that redefining *leitourgia* from being the singular procession and return of God from and to himself,

¹⁰¹ Frank C. Senn, *New Creation: A Liturgical Worldview* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 17-29. Senn presses toward a deeper sense of participation in the liturgical action; however, his analysis falls short because he does not trace the etymology of *leitourgia* back to its true participatory articulation as the work of One. Senn evidences the common mistake made by many liturgical scholars who effort to “renew” liturgy but cannot match speech with act due to this mistranslation.

whereby the polyphony of liturgies are gathered into the self-same *liturgy* Jesus is, to a local response to God's action, as though God has given something that Christians now give back to him, falsifies the Divine Economy. Rather, the divine love that radiates from God, which permeates the human so to become more fully human, assimilates humanity to the very being of God who is *actus purus*, the eternal community of reciprocal love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thereby making humanity one in body (image) to become one in spirit (likeness), animated by the *mystery* of Christ.

Persons are, then, at one with Christ insofar as they come to bear Christ in their bodies. The cross is paradigmatic, and is what makes all suffering intelligible and meaningful. The notion of Christ's disembodied suffering with the human in the current circumstance is not meaningful; it is the bodily suffering of God on the cross that grants meaning to human suffering, for all suffering is participatory. This brings to the fore the dialogue of Jesus with the sons of Zebedee when they ask if they can sit on the right and left side of Jesus in his kingdom, to which he responds "Can you drink of this cup?" But Jesus goes on to say that they will drink of *his* cup; they will become inebriated with his passion. It is this bodily bearing of Christ's passion that Ignatius uses in his argument against the Gnostics.

Stop your ears therefore when anyone speaks to you that stands apart from Jesus Christ, from David's scion and Mary's Son, who was really born and ate and drank, really persecuted by Pontius Pilate, really crucified and died while heaven and earth and the underworld looked on; who also really rose from the dead, since His Father raised Him up,—His Father, who will likewise raise us also who believe in Him through Jesus Christ, apart from whom we have no real life. But if, as some atheists, that is, unbelievers, say, His suffering was but a make-believe—when, in reality, they themselves are make-believers—then why am I in chains? Why do I even pray that I may fight wild beasts? In vain, then, do I die! My testimony is, after all, but a lie about the Lord!¹⁰²

¹⁰² Ignatius, *Epistle to the Trallians*, IX-XX.

This is a continuation of Paul who states that, “if Christ has not be raised then our proclamation is in vain and our faith is in vain.”¹⁰³ Ignatius, however, turns the notch a bit further making it undeniably clear that the death of Jesus is, in fact, the death and passion of God,¹⁰⁴ and it is the very passion and death of God that informs the nature of being.¹⁰⁵

The logic of participation found in the early fathers refutes the modern notion that “Christ is with us in our suffering,” as though he is sitting in the car with the victim as it sinks to the bottom of the lake, dying all over again with her. This is the disembodied logos of the Gnostics, not the fleshly Jesus who actually suffered, died and was resurrected. While this may sound pastorally sensitive and therapeutically beneficial, it paradoxically denigrates human suffering. What Paul, Ignatius and the early fathers with them understood, is that in them only one has suffered—only one can suffer, and any suffering that may come upon the Christian is a participation in the *singular suffering* of God in Christ. This in no way makes suffering on earth inconsequential; rather, the pain and suffering in this life, because of Christ and only because of his passion, death, resurrection and ascension, has meaning. God is not an empathizing therapist in the sky. God is the suffering Lord, who, through the bearing of Christ’s suffering in one’s body, the human is gathered into, and with this Christ, by the power of the Spirit, she returns to the Father. *God with us*, then, is not a moral or sentimental imperative, but *with us* in the sense that the active receiving of Christ’s passion is reception into the Godhead. No one has the ability to suffer.¹⁰⁶ It is Christ who grants such ability, for whose sake suffering is endured that one might find fellowship in him.¹⁰⁷ The offering and sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, i.e. *liturgy*—is a person, whose name is Jesus.

The identity that is given to the church is not a system of obligations or ritual expressions, as important as these things may be. The identity found in *leitourgia* as the singular Gift of God in Christ, which is the working out of

¹⁰³ 1 Corinthians 15.14.

¹⁰⁴ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Romans*, VI.

¹⁰⁵ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrneans*, I.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, IV.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* See also chapter three of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.

the Divine Economy in creation, is marked by the ecstatic love exemplified in the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, whereby multiplicity is gathered into unity as a single offering and sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving that is the fellowship of the Triune God. It is this identity—the *liturgy* Jesus is—that exacts a mimetic form of expression through ritual action. For this reason is the Eucharistic gathering properly called “liturgy,” not because it is the work of a people, but because it is a people’s participation in the mighty act of God in Christ, whereby the bodies, minds and souls of all are habituated by the faithfulness of the GodMan, and become through liturgical assimilation by volitive participation who they eternally are in Christ.¹⁰⁸ The church’s *liturgy*, then, is the ritual expression of who God is, though not merely expressive. In its Eucharistic feast the poles of heaven and earth are folded into one and the body of persons are gathered into God through the mystical feast, binding them together in actuality as the body of Christ.

Liturgy, therefore, is its own end, because it is the procession and return of God from and to himself made-manifest in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus as the economy he himself administrates is humankind’s entrance into the reciprocal love that is the Triune God, as the human receives the Gift and thereby becomes gift, which is her offering and sacrifice *with* the Son, through the Spirit, to the Father—Doxology.

Conclusion

Liturgy as “the people’s work,” serves to locate a person’s identity in her own hands. Naming, as it does, the service of worship of the church, *liturgy* has been mistaken to be humanistic in the worst sense of the term. It has been mistaken as an isolated act in time, either performed by a professional class of persons (clergy) for an audience (laity) or enacted collectively as a body of people (priesthood of all believers), which can only be assented to by faith, not participated in through the reason of the body. In each instance the understanding is the same: God has given salvation to those who follow Christ; Christians, therefore, perform liturgies to offer thanks and praise for

¹⁰⁸ Again, this too will become more explicit with Maximus Confessor in Chapter three.

the gift of salvation. The assumption here is that the baptized have a gift to offer unto Almighty God, i.e. their selves. To say that the human has something she can give—even herself—to God, is to say that one possesses within her being the initiatory capacity to engage God. It is both a rejection of human contingency and a denial of God as his own absolute contingency. This self-possession is the ultimate affront by the created to her Creator; it is the sin of all sins—it is Adam and Eve.

Leitourgia as illuminated throughout the writings of the early church fathers refuses both the Gnostic rejection of matter and the humanist departure from metaphysics. The modern mistranslation is more than a matter of semantics; it is an ontological chasm. This redefining of the term, however, is not the direct result of a new system of ideas or revelation in understanding. It is, rather, the evolution of rituals and practices throughout history that have served to dislocate the human from her participation in the singular, liturgical action that Christ is as Second Person of the Triune God, whose liturgy is the ontological union of *God with us*.

In the following chapters it will be shown how various liturgical reforms, specifically as they relate to new liturgical “technologies,” have served to create the necessary framework for the modern delusion of human flourishing and fulfillment as resting in the present tense of an intellectualism whereby human knowing is separable from active participation by knower in that which is known. That is, it will be shown that these liturgical makeovers have actually made it possible to understand *leitourgia* as an epistemological event, giving rise to modern systems of ideas that serve to divide God and humanity, thing from thing-signified, subject from object. The modern conviction that understanding must precede religious practice, it will be shown, is a fallacy. It will also be made known that this erroneous idea becomes possible in light of the liturgical reforms of the late Medieval Era that serve to create an environment within which a system of ideas could arise—could come to exist apart from ritual practice and habituation by inverting the relation of the mind and body in liturgical praxis. We will begin in chapter two with a sketch as to how the early fathers understood knowledge as derivative of God’s own self-knowing as perichoresis. Chapter three will

outline how human knowing is achieved by formative participation in liturgy, conditioned by the background provided by inhabiting a life of virtue and contemplation where the body is understood as inseparable from the soul/mind. In chapter four we will move into how specific liturgical reforms dislocate the human from this embodied knowing, invoking a secular human identity that creates a chasm between body and soul, distancing the human from the truth of her nature as contingent upon a distinct *relation-of-participation* to God. The final chapter will explore how a recovery of the human as *homo-liturgicus* is possible through a bodily comportment to perceive all things as participating in the eternal, liturgical action of God in Christ, made-manifest in all actions of reciprocity within the whole of creation.

2 Divine Liturgy and the Epistemological Crisis

“There is really no action without Jesus Christ.”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I suggested that essential to any articulation of the liturgical action of the church is a thorough examination of the meaning of the word *leitourgia* in its historical context prior to the inception of the church, especially its use in ancient Greek society as well as in the translation of the Septuagint. This is important for discerning how the apostle Paul distinctly employs the term as synonymous with the mediation of the divine economy, and how the traditional use of *leitourgia* in the early church creates certain parameters for understanding liturgical action as incorporation into the singular, eternal act of God in Christ. I have shown that this singular reference for understanding liturgical action shows that, so far as the early and medieval church is concerned, all liturgy participates positively or negatively¹ in the *Liturgy* Christ himself is.

Following the examples of liturgical action in ancient Greek society, which is sustained throughout antiquity and into the medieval era, it is what we might call a *festive reciprocity* that proves to condition one’s engagement in the body politic. In both senses—festival and reciprocity—do the earliest Christians enjoin themselves to the eternal festival of inter-Trinitarian

¹ This sense of participation will be more distinct with Maximus Confessor, as further explored below. It is important at this point to simply note the church’s historical understanding of the primacy of Christ as the unique paradigm for all human action, in which all human action stands in relation and is to be understood.

reciprocity through the liturgical act of making Eucharist. The apostle Paul's use of *leitourgia* exemplifies this understanding of liturgical action as inherently reciprocal because of the singularity of Christ's own liturgical action. The self-offering of Christ to the Father is, again, an inter-Trinitarian offering. Gift and giver, as I have shown, are hereby inseparable, bound together by a mutuality conditioned by the giving act, which is to say that God is *the* Gift he gives because he is the sole Giver as the singular act of Giving.

This understanding of *leitourgia* becomes increasingly clear as Paul's description is expanded in the writings of the early fathers. As I have shown, the singularity of Christ's liturgical action is that in which the hierarchical administration of the church's economy participates through Eucharistic mediation—the mediation of the divine economy. Accordingly, the church's act of making Eucharist is always to bear the distinct form of Christ's own sacrificial action, an act that is always directed toward God for the benefit of creation. Liturgy is hereby mediation by mimesis—a participation in God's self-mediation; it is to be *enacted-by* the Christ-act.² As I have suggested, Christ is the sole liturgical actor, who manifests the reciprocal nature of God as inter-Trinitarian self-offering (self-emptying). It is necessary, then, to draw out the implications of this inter-Trinitarian emptying. In this chapter, what I will show is that any understanding of liturgy is bound up together with what it means for God to be a community of Persons who exist as eternal, reciprocal self-offering.

To say, then, that Christ is Liturgy is to say that God is the end of all liturgical action. As the earliest Christians understood Christ to be the liturgy par excellence, likewise did the earliest theological expositions on the nature of this liturgy directly attend to the Eternal Liturgy of the Trinity—*perichoresis*, the Love who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. *Perichoresis* names the self-identifying action of inter-Trinitarian reciprocal love—the form of knowing the early church understood Christ to have revealed.

² As aforesaid, to participate in the self-offering of Christ to the Father is to be gathered into the eternal act of reciprocal love God is, which is to be “performed-by” love through an analogous self-emptying, self-giving. We can also relate this to Gadamer's understanding of an actor in a play. The words of a play are not so much spoken by the actor as they speak the actor into being. See Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (Continuum, 1985) 459. This is also to suggest that the poles of mediator and mediated are conflated by the act of liturgical mediation, which encompasses its participants.

The self-emptying of God in Christ³ reveals the nature of triune reciprocity—makes known the unknowable, the full and complete witness of the Son's identity as located in his being-known by the Father, i.e. identity as gift. The Cappadocian Fathers, the champions of Trinitarian orthodoxy, name the relationality of the Three in One and One in Three as inter-Trinitarian permeation. *Perichoresis* is the eternal interpenetration of love, the very substance of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Love is the act of knowing. As the Father is to the Son so also is the Son to the Father, and likewise are both to the Spirit and the Spirit to Father and Son. This is the knowing-love of the Trinity, what Sergii Bulgakov speaks of as Divine Sophia. Each Person of the Triune God knows as they are known within hypostatic unity. The Father receives himself in the eternal procession and return of the Spirit from and back to the Father through the Son.

Liturgy is hereby the inter-Trinitarian reception of Personhood in the giving of the Father to the Son, who, identified in the Father's knowing of himself as Father of the Son, receives his Personhood in the Spirit's procession and return to the Father. The Spirit is the liturgical gift who proceeds from the Father and returns to the Father through—and only through—the Son,⁴ eternally identified and identifying gift-giving-giver. This eternal procession and return from and to the Father by the Spirit through the Son is the eternal differentiating of unity and gathering of difference into unity, which is the eternal knowing of the Holy Trinity in its absolute being-known—absolute triune contingency. This eternal knowing is God's self-emptying, which is an eternal emptying. While each Person of the Holy Trinity is God, neither Person considers their Godhood to be exploitable, but empty themselves, eternally, for one another, receiving their full Godhood in the eternal giving and receiving of each to and from the other.

The three hypostases of the Holy Trinity are hereby at once more distinct one from the other than any materially divided beings, yet are more

³ Philippians 2.

⁴ John of Damascus, "An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith," I.viii, in Frederic Hathaway Chase, Jr., trans., *Saint John of Damascus: Writings* (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1958).

whole and abundant than the most singular of created realities.⁵ The differentiating unity God is names a particular form of knowing that is inherently active. Act and Being are inseparable in God; and this ontological particularity bears much on the early church's understanding of how God knows and makes *himself* known. The Father knows the Son in the eternal giving and return of *himself* to and from the Son in the procession of the Spirit who both frees the Father to love the Son and unites the Son to the Father in the eternal procession and return. God's own self-knowledge is not found or "discovered" in the giving and receiving of *himself* to *himself*; rather, God's self-knowledge is his own Trinitarian, reciprocal action of begetting and being begotten, of proceeding and returning. Accordingly, God's knowing is always a knowing of himself. God knows that which is membered to *him*. Knowledge, therefore, of God and self are attainable for the human only by her being gathered into the procession and return of God from *himself* to *himself*.⁶ Christ is in his own Person the sacrament with whom the human returns to the Father, by the Spirit. Christ, then, is the eternal axis on which all things hinge; he is the Tree of Life. By his unconfused union—the gathering of humanity into divine procession and return—he re-members the episteme of human nature to the truth of transcendent Being.

To know, therefore, is to be known—to be membered (assimilated) to that which one seeks to know. To forget—amnesia (amnesia)—is to dis-member oneself from that which knows and is known. To be forgotten, then, is to be un-known—dis-membered. "Depart from me, for I never knew you," is to be outside the memory of God, external to the interpenetrating economy of knowledge the Trinity is. To be forgotten is to be outside of communion (common-union) with God, which is to not be membered in the mutual permeation of God in the Eucharist.

Before perichoresis is understood in terms of triune permeation, however, it is first used to describe the reciprocal penetration of the divine-human natures in Christ. It names the spatial altering of created reality that, though transformative, does not subsume the created, but rather frees it to be

⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *Oration 34*, viii (NPNF).

⁶ John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, I.vii.

permeated and to mutually permeate the Creator. It is, as Clement of Alexandria defines it, the permeation of creation by God,⁷ a permeation that is inherently reciprocal. The two natures of Christ do not transform one into the other, but are at once more distinct in their union and more full in their being unconfused.⁸ That is, the two natures are made-manifest (made-present) one to the other, *membered* together, undivided and unconfused, i.e. assimilated, by divine permeation. The two natures do not collapse into one nature, nor do the two wills coalesce into one will; rather, the human, divided against its nature by sin, is assimilated by volitive obedience to the divine will, showing forth the truth of human nature as the image of the invisible God, made visible in Christ. The body of Christ is the *tool* by which all of creation is gathered into the eternal relation that is Holy Trinity. The early church expressed this gathering via the sacrament of baptism, specifically creation as being gathered into Christ by his baptism in the river Jordan. “What need has Jesus of baptism?”, they asked, and in harmonious reply it is the baptism of Jesus that baptizes creation. Christ’s descent into the Jordan is creation’s ascent into God. In Christ God assimilates humanity to divinity and through this unconfused union God assimilates creation to its Creator.

Knowledge of God, therefore, according to the fathers of the early church, is only available through God’s self-disclosure in Christ.⁹ *That* God is implanted in human nature,¹⁰ and divine revelation provides knowledge of God in action, making human action intelligible. It is this that Paul describes in his letter to the Corinthians. ‘If I speak like angels, have prophetic powers, have all knowledge and faith, but do not have love, I am nothing.’¹¹ Love is understood in terms of being-known by God.¹² To have love—to be known by God—is to participate in the love of God in Christ; it is to know in being-known and to do all things according to the free obedience of the Son to the Father.

⁷ op cit. Michael Kunzler, *The Church's Liturgy* (London: Continuum, 2001), 80.

⁸ Gregory of Nazianzen, *Oration XXXIV*, vii (NPNF).

⁹ John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, I.viii.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 13.

¹² 1 Corinthians 8.3.

Christ is, therefore, the locus of God's knowing and the human's being-known. Irenaeus is most clear on the form that knowledge takes in Christ. Knowledge is revelation:

For no one can know the Father, unless through the Word of God, that is, unless by the Son revealing [Him]; neither can he have knowledge of the Son, unless through the good pleasure of the Father. But the Son performs the good pleasure of the Father; for the Father sends, and the Son is sent, and comes. And His Word knows that His Father is, as far as regards us, invisible and infinite; and since He cannot be declared [by anyone else], He does Himself declare Him to us; and, on the other hand, *it is the Father alone who knows His own Word*. And both these truths has our Lord declared. Wherefore the Son reveals the knowledge of the Father through His own manifestation. For the manifestation of the Son is the knowledge of the Father; for all things are manifested through the Word.¹³

The crucial aspect of Irenaeus' explication on how one comes to know God is in his relating of key points in scripture with the perichoretic relation within Christ. No one can know the Father except the Son reveal Him,¹⁴ but Irenaeus goes on to say that "it is the Father alone who knows His own Word." What, then, is the manner of this manifesting or revealing?

[The] Word was manifested when the Word of God was made man, *assimilating Himself to man, and man to Himself*, so that by means of his resemblance to the Son, man might become precious to the Father. For in times long past, it was said that man was created after the image of God, but it was not [actually] shown; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created. Wherefore also he did easily lose the similitude. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, He confirmed both these: for He both showed forth the image

¹³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.vi.3, *italics mine*.

¹⁴ John 8.19.

truly, since He became Himself what was His image; and He re-established the similitude after a sure manner, by *assimilating man to the invisible Father* through means of the visible Word.¹⁵

The human knows the Son because she has become the Son, (re)assimilated to the Word. As such, the human is known to the Father in the Son's being-known with the Father in the perichoretic relation, making knowledge of the Father available to the human, having been gathered into the perichoresis by the Son's assimilating himself to humanity and humanity to himself. Without the agency of the Son, none can know God.¹⁶ That is, unless humanity is assimilated to the Word by the incarnate act of God in Christ, knowledge of God is only conjecture.

Returning to Irenaeus' commentary on Matthew 11.27 and Luke 10.22, "no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him," Irenaeus picks up with John 8, specifically 8.42, which he reads together with the passage above to enforce his claim that to know the Father is to love the Son and to love the Son is to do the will of the Father. For Irenaeus, as with the rest of the early fathers, to know is to actively become united to that which one seeks to know. To know is to be membered with what is known, opening the knower herself to being known by that which is known to her. There is no subject-object relation in Christian antiquity. To know is to participate in the reality of that which is known.

I

How the human knows or comes in contact with God has been the source of much controversy throughout all of human history, but prior to the incarnation of the Christ, much of divine presence is largely understood in terms of proximity and ritual. The *praesentia* of a god in the ancient world is bound up with temple, image, and the priestly rituals that invoked the god's animate presence. Gods occupied a space of worship, and this space was clearly more

¹⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V.xvi.2, *italics mine*.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, IV.vii.3.

to the worshipper than a gathering place or a place within which rituals would occur. The temple, shrine, icons and images were all spaces that mediated, through the liturgical action, the *praesentia* of the god. Temples, statues, icons and various other objects were not understood in any sense to be the deity itself or things to be worshipped as the iconoclast would have one believe;¹⁷ rather, those who worshipped their deity before the image understood the deity to have come to visit them through the image. Temple and image are portals through which the deity comes to rest amidst the lives of his/her people. The various places and objects communicated the *praesentia* of the gods, they are the locus of their grace and favor, but there is a causal relation between the *praesentia* of the god and the cultic ritual his/her priests. By performing the various rituals of one's god, the priest or representative caused the *ba* (spirit/soul) of the god to animate the image and thereby occupy the space of the temple.¹⁸ This causal mediation carries with it the double effect of a god's absence with the absence of ritual. The liturgical activities of a god's priest insures not the favor of the god but the presence of the god among the people. One finds this in the complaints of the temple priests throughout Rome, claiming that it is the atheism of the Christians that have caused the misfortune of Rome due to the displeasure of the gods.¹⁹

The clear sense here is that in the ancient world the presence of the divine requires the causal mediation of priestly ritual. The priests and their rituals guarantee the *praesentia* of the gods. The temple/image is not the god itself, but is the medium for contact with the god. The weight of divine presence, however, is bound up with the ritual activities of clerical elites who cause the spirit of the god to "show up." As mediated, the ritual actions of the priests take precedence over that which is mediated, namely *praesentia divina*.

¹⁷ For an interesting study on the fetishizing of images, see Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 266-292. It is not the worshipper who believes her god to be the image or even "located" in the image. It is the iconoclast who believes this and confesses his belief by dashing the image with his hammer.

¹⁸ John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 113-134.

¹⁹ Critics will certainly see an element of job security here. Without the priests and their rituals there is nothing to cause the animating spirit of the god to dwell among the people. Additionally, if things go wrong it cannot be related to the priestly ritual, for this only causes the mediation; disfavor by the gods is only evidence of their disappointment with the people whom they have "come down" upon to rest.

The divine has a secondary role in the liturgical economy of the ancient world.²⁰ As Alexander Schmemmann points out, it is for this reason that every reading, action, prayer, song, etc., be dramatized with precision that the reality of divine presence be mediated to its worshippers.

The representation of the myth is therefore in some sense more real than the myth, since only within the cult and by participation in it is the idea of the myth communicated to people. The cult is primary; the myth is defined by the cult and grows out of it. Hence the symbolicalness of the mysteriological cult, its dramatic character, the elaboration in it of all the details of the myth. Its whole meaning is the precise re-enactment of the drama of salvation, since the drama does not exist outside this cult.²¹

In the sense the worship of the gods in the ancient world is something of a simulation, although these ancient norms cannot be criticized so easily from a modern point of view. The simulacrum is not that of which Baudrillard describes in “Simulacra and Simulation,” where the image presents itself as the thing it represents. This, once again, is the iconoclast’s critique, and it is here that Schmemmann may go a bit too far in his criticism. To reiterate a previous point, there was not a time when the ancient worshippers at the temple throughout the ancient world would have thought the god to be the statue or somehow physically to be grasped. As John Walton humorously points out, “The Egyptians did not believe that one could go step on Nut’s (the sky goddess) toes, or throw a rock and hit her knees.”²² This is a modern projection onto an ancient understanding that simply didn’t exist. The space did not constitute the reality; rather, and this is the sticking point, it is the actions that surround the space or occupy the space that make it real. Simulation in the Baudrillardian sense of modern reifications that present copies as the real itself cannot be imposed on the ancient mind.²³ What is

²⁰ Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1966), 106.

²¹ *Ibid*, 107.

²² Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 181.

²³ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

important here is Schmemmann's insight that the reality of the myth in the ancient world only exists insofar as the cult exists.²⁴ The rites of the priests do not *participate* in the greater reality of the actions of the divine; rather, they cause the divine to be present. The human does not participate in the life of the divine; the human exists in a unilateral relation of exchange with her god and ne're the two shall touch.

With Israel, this ancient mythological understanding of divine presence is surpassed, though many similarities remain present. The *shekhinah*, or inhabitation, of YHWH was at Mt. Sinai, in the Tabernacle, and finally in the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem. The distinction is found in the construction of YHWH's dwelling place. YHWH gives Moses the blueprints for the tabernacle in which the Lord would be present with his people (Exodus 34-40). Building the dwelling place of YHWH is understood in very different terms than how other ancient temples and shrines are created. Among the Egyptians, temples and images are constructed to show the character or function of a god, but is done by the architectural sensibilities of a priest. When Moses sets out to build the tabernacle of the Lord he does so "as the Lord had commanded."²⁵

II

There is a clear sense throughout the early church that the human knows God in proportion to the extent that she gives herself to being-known through a participation in the liturgical actions of the church, actions by which God makes himself knowable.²⁶ A person likewise knows who they are in being-known by God through active participation in erotic-knowing.²⁷ Liturgy

²⁴ Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 108.

²⁵ Exodus 39; "As the Lord commanded Moses" is repeated eight times in Exodus 39, specifically relating that it is the Lord who has prescribed the order and construct of his dwelling place, not Moses. See also Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 313-314.

²⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.163-183.

²⁷ Erotic-knowing here describes the inter-subjectivity of knowing, where subject and object coalesce in the activity of making known, being-known, and being-made-known. Desire and understanding are hereby interwoven. To know erotically, therefore, is to know within the act of being-known-by that which one desires to know and thereby knows oneself as a participant in this contingent being-known-by a knower. Erotic-knowing refuses unilateral understanding; it is a knowing that is inherently reciprocal, a mutual giving and receiving that infinitely expands by the desire to know as known-by. See Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles*, ed. John Kenneth Riches, trans. Andrew Louth, Francis

names this inter-Trinitarian relation that has been made known to humanity through the mighty act of God in Christ—grace—that makes available the entrance of humanity into the reciprocal, eternal relation God is. Gathered into the self-offering of the Son²⁸ to the Father through the Spirit, the human takes from God's own store to offer herself as an offering with the Son qua *Offering*—whose self-offering is eternally present to the Father for the life of the world. The human's self-offering or living sacrifice is not to be understood, then, as an entering into a subject-object relation with God. Rather, it is to become lost in erotic-knowing, having been adopted into perichoretic interpenetration with God by the Son's assimilating of human nature to the divine nature. This being lost, however, is the ultimate receiving of one's identity—the being-known of God. Grace moves humanity beyond its natural divisiveness,²⁹ gathered into Reciprocity by assimilation, without negating difference. No longer can the human know herself as human—cannot know the limitations and possibilities of her nature—apart from her assimilation to Divinity. The human's being is eternally located in divine action—*esse actus purus*.

God creates humanity to redeem humanity—to deify humanity to become God. Created life, then, is good by nature,³⁰ but as created it is continually *being created*. When the human willfully³¹ ascends through

McDonagh, and Brian McNeil, C.R.V., vol. II, *The Glory of the Lord* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984), 95-106. See especially Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2002), 178-201. For Merleau-Ponty, “Erotic perception is not a *cogitation* which aims at a *cogitatum*; through one body it aims at another body, and takes place in the world, not in a consciousness (note that Merleau-Ponty offers both an intellectual consciousness and a body consciousness). A sight has a sexual significance for me, not when I consider, even confusedly, its possible relationship to the sexual organs or to pleasurable states, but when it exists for my body, for that power always available for bringing together into an erotic situation the stimuli applied, and adapting sexual conduct to it. There is an erotic ‘comprehension’ not of the order of understanding, since understanding subsumes an experience, once perceived, under some idea, while desire comprehends blindly by linking body to body” (181). This “comprehending blindly” is to suggest that embodied habits of the body that link bodies together, whereby human understanding is first and foremost intuited by sense perception and only secondarily intellectual, even though intellection is vital to the relation.

²⁸ Hebrews 10.

²⁹ Maximus, “Chapters on Knowledge,” II.21, in George C. Berthold, trans., *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

³⁰ John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1969), 149.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 145-151.

liturgical participation to the location of her identity in the perichoretic relation of the Holy Trinity, she realizes her personhood to be sustained in, by and through the shared life that is Father, Son, Spirit—*Thought, Word, Deed*.³² That is, she loses herself, and in this losing is the ultimate receiving of her identity in the being-known of God. The human becomes known *with* the Son through the Spirit by the Father, and thereby knows herself as the Father's own, eternally identified with the Son.

Gregory of Nyssa speaks of knowledge as available only to one who participates in the severe and rigorous way of Christ. To those who are incontinent, knowledge is inaccessible. The incontinent are like thieves who try to steal the fruit of the pomegranate tree and are cut and pricked by the thorns that guard its fruit. The incontinent do not realize that the pleasure and joy of the pomegranate is only available to those who are disciplined by faith, bearing the yolk of Christ. For the continent person formed in the way the thorns yield, permitting full access to the fruit. The continent is one who has not grown soft by the luxuries and pleasures of the present life and is truly able to taste the fruit of the tree. Disciplined by the sacramental life of the church, the continent one progresses further and further in the grove of faith.

For the aim of the life of virtue is to become like God; and this is the reason why the virtuous take great pains to cultivate purity of soul and freedom from passions, so that the form, as it were, of transcendent Being might be revealed in them because of their more perfect life.³³

When purity is cultivated in a person she is able to see and to “know herself,” for the glory of the Lord that lies within will have been made known to her. Gregory elaborates this point in terms of the beauty of the invisible made visible by the mirror of human nature. First, however, it must be understood what Gregory means by mirror.

³² This is in no way to introduce any hint of modalism; rather, it is to draw together the implications of liturgy as the coming together for the human of thought, word, and deed, which is her being gathered into the Liturgy that is the perichoretic union, the God who *is* the Thought he thinks, the Word he speaks, and the Deed he does, known as none other than Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

³³ Gregory of Nyssa, “Commentary on the Song of Songs,” Sermon IX, in Daniélou, *From Glory to Glory*. See also *The Life of Moses*, II.157.

In the modern age it is standard to understand the mirror in terms of its reflective use. Accordingly, a mirror is a reflecting tool that is wholly external to the image it reflects. There is no engagement or interaction that occurs between the mirror and the image reflected. The two are fixed, isolated entities. The modern mirror as a reflecting tool reduces the image to the image in-itself, something re-presented back to the subject whose image is reflected.

The modern Venetian mirror of the fourteenth century that introduces the first clear image, a looking glass without stains or bubbles, enabled persons to see for the first time not in a glass darkly or dimly but clearly and perfectly. One could see the unclouded image of God. This *pure* reflection of the image alters the whole meaning of what a mirror is and does. The new looking-glass provides a release from the reciprocal essence of human nature, imposing an unilateral logic upon its viewer. This modernized tool of reflection bears the logic of the self-knowing self—a person who can be seen through her own eyes, perfectly reflected.

Before the clarified mirror self-knowledge is acquired only through a reciprocal engagement with people, places and things in a mingling of lights. In the ancient world the mirror is understood in very different terms. Following a Platonic logic of the mirror as described in the *Timaeus*, what takes place when a person stands in front of the mirror is that the light of the eyes mingle (coalesce) with the light on the surface of the mirror, the two lights forming the image on the mirror.³⁴ There are at least two lights involved in the forming of the image, made present to the eye of the beholder. The image is real; it is *there* on the surface of the mirror. The mirror can be anything, here. The light of the human eye is not a kind of filter that when it sees the object before her she simply sees the object as something consumed by the eye. Rather, the thing looks back at her with its own light. The two lights come together to form the image that is thereby known by the human. The two lights permeate one another, mingle together to form an image. It is in this sense that beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. The co-mingling of

³⁴ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Robert Gregg Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 46.A-C.

lights create an image that is received as beautiful based on the form made-manifest by the co-mingling of lights. Beauty does not simply reside in the object of the human's gaze (Hume), nor does beauty lie purely in the abstracted, rationally trained eye (Kant). Rather, the quality of light produced by the object and likewise the subject, mingle together to form an image, thereby construed as beautiful or hideous on the basis of the compatibility of lights.

There is evidence of this *mingling* in the words of Jesus in Matthew and Luke's Gospel, where Jesus speaks of the lamp of the body.³⁵ The language is primarily located in what is gazed upon by the human; however, it is clear in the gospels that objects emit their own light, be it darkened or dazzling.

Your eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light; but if your eye is not healthy, your whole body is full of darkness. Therefore, consider whether the light in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be as full of light as when a lamp gives you light with its rays.³⁶

In Luke's gospel, this discussion of light is preceded by a reference to the story of Jonah's relation to Nineveh as a sign of God's Kingdom—the light of Christ. Jonah is the mirror by which the light of God emanates to reconcile the people of Nineveh. Jonah, the reluctant missionary, was no less a vehicle of light. Reading the story of Jonah in light of Luke's gospel, Jonah is as Peter, who walked out upon the sea gazing upon the Lord and lost sight of the light because of the tumultuous winds and waves. Jonah saw only the darkness of Nineveh. The light emitted from the Ninevites was a darkened light; but gazing only upon their darkness Jonah is himself filled with darkness and moved to anger, even after Nineveh turns from its wickedness to serve “the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”³⁷

³⁵ Matthew 6.22-23; Luke 11.34-36.

³⁶ Luke 11.34-36.

³⁷ Jonah 1.9.

Jesus goes further and says, “No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar, but on a lamp stand so that those who enter may see the light.”³⁸ Jonah, however, as we see evidenced in the two passages, had tried to do just that, place the light of God in a cellar, which is Jesus’ same condemnation of the Pharisees,³⁹ reminiscent of the dialogue between God and Jonah under the bush outside of Nineveh.⁴⁰ The Pharisees offered a simulation of divine light, while consumed by darkness within.⁴¹ Jesus goes on to say that the Ninevites received the sign-Jonah, though he was but a mirror reflecting God’s light, but this generation of Israel would be condemned by the Ninevites because, making a subtle reference to the light he is, “something greater than Jonah is here!”⁴²

We find here in Luke’s gospel a continuation of the Song of Simeon. “For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”⁴³ Simeon addresses Mary and Joseph after his blessing, saying that Jesus would reveal the inner thoughts of humans.⁴⁴ The light of Christ exposes not only the darkness covering the world, but the gaze of God in Christ also exposes the divine light within all created life. Christ is the gaze of God upon all creation. He is the light that permeates the light inherent to creation as created, opening the human to her contingent lucidity in the comingling of divine and created lights.

Accordingly, the healthy body is made healthy by its gaze upon the light-Christ. This is brought into full view in Matthew’s account, whereby the preceding passage regards storing up treasures on earth⁴⁵ and the following passage concerns serving two masters.⁴⁶ “Where your treasure is, there also

³⁸ Luke 11.33.

³⁹ Luke 11.37-41

⁴⁰ Jonah 4.6-11.

⁴¹ Luke 11.39.

⁴² Luke 11.32.

⁴³ Luke 2.30-32

⁴⁴ Luke 2.35.

⁴⁵ Matthew 6.19-21.

⁴⁶ Matthew 6.24.

your heart,”⁴⁷ is likewise a casting of one’s gaze. That upon which one’s gaze is cast is that which fills the body. This casting of gaze, however, is no mere looking at objects; rather, it involves a master-slave relation. The human’s gaze—her seeing and knowledge of all things—is located in her obedience to and being disciplined by the object of her gaze. To gaze upon the light of God—Christ, is to be permeated by divinity, whereby the created light of the human mingles with the divine light—Christ, so that the human sees all things with a double-light, an unconfused light, that reveals the object of gaze to the human in its own manner of participation in divine contingency.

For Plato, the light of the form is the light that goes forth from the object of gaze. The object participates in its eternal form by its likeness to the form. The light of the object is not a light particular to itself but is alighted by the idea/form. Christ, however, introduces himself as the primordial Form, i.e. Light, who has given the created a light “of its own.” This light remains contingent upon *the* Light—Christ, yet the light of the created exists as an endowment. It is *there*, embedded in the person, place or thing. The all-permeating light, Christ, does not simply shine through the empty vessel; rather, the Light permeates the created light whereby the two lights—Creator and created—mingle together to show forth the truth of the created’s nature with implications for knowing the Creator. This third light—the Light, Christ—mingles with both created lights of subject and object, forming an image that is made visible in its contingent relation to the illuminating God, strengthening the distinction of subject and object while simultaneously removing the apparent division between the two. Christ is the unconfused union of all things.

III

How the human knows herself and the world around her is, for Gregory of Nyssa, the difference between the two trees in the Garden of Eden. The contrast between the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is nearly identical in the accounts of Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil, and John of Damascus. The tree of life is the tree of

⁴⁷ Matthew 6.21.

obedience—Christ’s cross. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is disobedience, whereby the human understands his or her relation to creation only in terms of his or her unaligned passions and desires. To eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge is to phenomenologize the world, a kind of Kantian, reasoned tastefulness.⁴⁸ That is, to notice the other as naked is to only see the body—to see only matter,⁴⁹ which is not to truly see the body in its relation to the soul and its co-mingling with the divine light. It is to construe the object of one’s gaze in a kind of radical subjectivity, permitting no reciprocal identification, only projection.

There are, then, two faculties of vision, “one that sees the truth, and the other that wanders off into senseless things.”⁵⁰ The tree of life does not see through the bodily passions where all objects are objects of desire. The tree of death—the tree of knowledge of good and evil—is the tree of non-being or privation of good.⁵¹ The two trees are two distinct ways of knowing. The first is through active participation in the good—the co-mingling of lights, the second denies the penetrating light of divinity, which is the result of an absence of virtue in action—privation of good.⁵²

As seen with Aristotle, it is not that human action necessarily or causally gives way to knowledge, any more than knowledge necessarily produces action. Nevertheless, a person’s activities construe how one understands and what is intelligible to a person. For instance, to continue the analogy of the mirror, the modern mirror construes how the human sees herself, by construing *how* she sees. The human becomes an object of her own gaze, conflating the subjectivity and objectivity of the self into a single subject-object *in-itself*.

This construal of the ancient mirror logic promotes a self that only knows by its own unilateral light, projected upon all objects, which, as it were,

⁴⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer (London: Continuum, 2006), 37-39.

⁴⁹ Conor Cunningham, “Suspending the Natural Attitude,” in *Transcendence and Phenomenology*, ed. Peter M. Candler and Conor Cunningham (London: SCM Press, 2007), 260-287.

⁵⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Sermon VIII.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Sermon XII.

⁵² *Ibid.*

have no light to reciprocate. The un-mirrored self stands in a quite different relation to her object of gaze. One knows an object to have a “life of its own,” which enables the self-subject to enter into a knowing relationship *with* the object. The human looks upon, for instance, a beautiful daisy. The daisy (object) is a real flower. It does not exist in the eye of its beholder, even though the beholder uniquely sees the daisy. One’s perceiving of the daisy in no way alters the truth of the daisy. It is there, whether it is admired for its beauty or not seen at all. The subject-object relation of a person to a daisy is not, therefore, unilateral. The human is not the only one involved in the knowing that occurs between the person and a daisy. The daisy does have something to say, namely that the human is not a daisy, which it says quite loudly. It is as in the film *The Seventh Seal*,⁵³ where a medieval squire stops to ask a dead man sitting on a rock for directions. He returns to his knight saying, “Eloquent.” To which the Knight responds, “What did he say?” “Too dark to repeat,” says the squire. There is a reciprocity of knowing between the human and a daisy, even the dead, and such reciprocal knowing is vital for human self-knowledge. This is necessary whether the subject-object relation occurs between a flower, a rock or another person. Self-knowledge occurs when one becomes open to the knowledge of oneself from that which is not oneself—when an awareness of the created light is visible in all things. The modern mirror deconstructs this field of knowledge. Its very existence imposes a logic of individuation that is not easily avoided. To gaze into a mirror is to enter into a unilateral, subject-object relation with oneself, whereby the subject (self) is the object (self) and the object (self) is the subject (self)—tautology.⁵⁴ Self-knowledge is available to the self-subject by the self-object, and the human knows herself in this falsely reciprocal, unilateral virtual relation.

One thinks of Johannes Gump’s *Self-Portrait* (1646), here.⁵⁵ The painting is that of one in the act of painting his own image via his reflected image. The artist’s back is the portrayed “self,” who is reflected in the mirror

⁵³ *The Seventh Seal*, dir. Ingmar Bergman (Stockhold, Sweden: Svensk Filmindustri, 1957), DVD.

⁵⁴ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 168.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 166-168.

image to his left, with the canvas receiving the artist's reflected image being painted on the right. The artist bears witness of himself to himself; all is conjecture and subjectivity.⁵⁶ The individual portrait, which arises when the human comes to understand herself as a human subject, capable of objectivity, comes about on the heels of the perfected glass mirror. It would be impossible to construe this argument causally, i.e. chicken or egg, yet it should not be dismissed that the logic of the mirror is evidenced in the rise of the self-portrait in the 15th Century—the self-subject self. Without the mirror, the self as subject may never have been thought. This cannot be more than conjectured; however, the self as knowing itself by being known by itself—the self as “self-revelatory”—is known with the mirror. The mirror, like the photograph, assures the viewer that she is. Following a sort of Cartesian logic, one could say with the modern mirror that “I reflect; therefore, I am.” It should come as no surprise, here, that during the Enlightenment the reflected image becomes proof of one's being. The living-dead, the vampire, has no reflection. He is dead. Therefore, only the self can bear witness, via the reflecting-tool—the mirror—to itself that it is alive.⁵⁷ Gump's *Self-Portrait* is important, not because he used a mirror to paint his own face; it is important because he painted himself bearing witness to himself that he is, revealing the unilateral self-knowledge that the mirror guises as reciprocal knowing.⁵⁸ The modern Venetian mirror does not simply provide a perfected reflection to its image; it (mis)construes its viewer and her being-in-the-world. The clarified mirror is itself a *weltanschauung*. The world-view created by the mirror, however, does exactly what it cannot do, which is to provide an exact image of its viewer. The mirror only deconstructs its viewer to what the mirror can reflect, which is only the material object in view, absent of mind and soul. With Gregory, however, to know oneself is not to see by way of the reflected re-presentation. Gregory's call to *know thyself* is a call to know the Good and

⁵⁶ Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 168.

⁵⁷ One could also argue here that the vampire is the truly alive, for he only knows of his existence in his relation to the living. He cannot “know himself” as himself, but only knows himself in his relation to others; literally feeding on the lives of others.

⁵⁸ See Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 101-132. Melchior-Bonnet traces the development of the modern mirror, harkening back to the early medieval understanding of creation as the mirror of God, a mirror that bears a distinctly participatory relation to its creator. However, with a looking glass that returns a perfect image of its viewer that relation is rent asunder.

know human nature only in its relation to the Light of God. Indeed, “our greatest perfection,” says Gregory, “is self-knowledge.”⁵⁹ To do so, however, humans must

avoid the delusion that we are seeing ourselves when we are in reality looking at something else. This is what happens to those who do not scrutinize themselves. What they see is strength, beauty, reputation, political power, abundant wealth, pomp, self-importance, bodily stature, a certain grace of form or the like, and they think that this is what they are. Such persons make very poor guardians of themselves: because of their absorption in something else... one must know himself as he is, and distinguish himself from all that is not he.⁶⁰

The human, for Gregory, is at her core a participant in the divine life.

[Humans] alone are made in the likeness of that nature which surpasses all understanding; you alone are a similitude of eternal beauty, a receptacle of happiness, an image of the true Light; *and if you look up to Him, you will become what He is, imitating Him Who shines within you, Whose glory is reflected in your purity.*⁶¹

To *know thyself*, then, is to know oneself as the mirror upon which the Light—Christ, the Image-Light of God—is cast and re-cast. Such knowledge is made present to the human through the gaze of virtue, a continual becoming in likeness to the Image through participation in the tree of life—the taking up of one’s cross, the fruit showing forth the true nature of a tree,⁶² the brilliance of light showing the quality of the lamp. Full illumination—deification, is the end of virtue. The mutual gaze of God upon the human and the human upon God is made known in the willed and active gathering of created lights into this reciprocal co-mingling in virtue.

⁵⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Sermon II.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, *italics mine.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, Sermon XII.

It is the human's participation in virtuous action that transforms her and makes known to her the nature of her humanity as a vessel for this double mingling of lights.

The only way for the soul to be attached to the incorruptible God is for it to make itself as pure as it can. In this way, reflecting *as the mirror does*, when it submits itself to the purity of God, it will be formed according to its participation in and reflection of the prototypal beauty.⁶³

The logic, here, is that the divine light that shines upon the human, who has placed herself before God, supplies the image. The mingling of lights on the surface of the mirror that is the object—in this case the Light of Christ and the light of the human—is, for Gregory, an active and mutual penetration of the two natures, divine and human, inasmuch as the human's gaze is locked on Christ. The human has “her own beauty,” but it is not Beauty; rather, it is the truth of her createdness. The human is made into the likeness, according to Gregory, of the image—the beauty on which her gaze is cast. This works positively and negatively. To gaze upon evil forms an image of the beholder as depraved and capable only of sinful actions. Casting one's gaze upon God, however, makes manifest the human's true nature—the divine image, a participant in divine goodness.⁶⁴

One need not take such elaborate examples to understand what Gregory is getting at here. If a person is continually watching the exemplar of faith in the manner of her actions and does so long enough, a person will, in all likelihood, be moved to so act. It is in this way that husbands and wives grow closer together and further apart. The two who are bound together as one in holy matrimony, if they are continually present with the other they will begin to share many of the same characteristics in behavior and understanding. This is certainly true for children, the most observant of humans walking the earth, who see (or do not see) their parents day in and day out. Children

⁶³ Gregory of Nyssa, “On Virginitly,” XI, in Virginia Woods Callahan, trans., *Saint Gregory of Nyssa: Ascetical Works* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1967).

⁶⁴ Ocular reception of the Eucharist as a becoming that upon which the gaze is cast. Nevertheless, this logic was doomed to fail as it is not the consumption of the body and blood that it is intended to be.

become near carbon copies of their parents' character, some spending many years in therapy for it. Gregory's observation here is quite elemental: you become the image formed by the co-mingling of lights, those of the human and her object of gaze.

In days of old the human race grew cold with the chill of idolatry, and man's changeable nature was transformed into the nature of the immobile objects which he worshipped... For those who look toward the true God receive within themselves the characteristics of the divine nature; so too, those who turn their minds to the vanity of idols are transformed into the objects which they look at, and become stones instead of men.⁶⁵

Subject and object are hereby indivisible. The two mutually *know* one another. And to the extent that the human's gaze is cast upon her object is the degree to which she locates her identity in the object of her gaze. The two are folded into one, making the human subject into the likeness of the object—more specifically the object of worship, which, if the object of gaze is not God, is a forsaking of her true image—she is as all who gazed into the eyes of Medusa and are turned to stone.

This form of knowledge is clearly participatory. Like Aristotle, Gregory makes the point clear that the ability to receive and process knowledge is contingent upon the human having been formed by the virtues—the sacramental life of the church.⁶⁶

Now, how can you see a beautiful image in a mirror unless it has received the impression of a beautiful form? So it is with the mirror of human nature: *it cannot become beautiful until it draws near to the Beautiful and becomes transformed by the image of the divine Beauty*. When our human nature lay fallen upon the earth it looked towards the serpent and held its image. But now that it has arisen and looks toward the good, turning its back on sin it takes on the form of the good towards which it

⁶⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Sermon V.

⁶⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *On Virginity*, XII.

faces. For it looks now upon the archetypal Beauty—for that is the Dove. For, turning towards the light, it has been made into the image of light, and within this light it has taken on the lovely form of the Dove—I mean the Dove that symbolizes the presence of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁷

The mirror of human nature shows forth the beauty of the image to the extent that the lights of the human and God mingle together on the mirror of the soul⁶⁸ to show forth their union in glory by a likeness in participation and mutual penetration⁶⁹—the human nature having been pre-penetrated by the divine esse at creation,⁷⁰ fully held together in Christ. To say that the human is a mirror, then, is to say that she is the mirror *for* (not of) the *imago Dei*. The mingling of lights is an active participation that realigns the human gaze. Human action limits or expands the field of knowledge.⁷¹ In order for the human to know Beauty she must become beautiful; she must be impressed with Beauty's form. Only when the human has been rightly formed through participation can she truly know; for the vision of the Good is made possible by a uniformity of life to virtue.⁷² This is the reason why the virtuous take great pains to cultivate purity of soul and freedom from the passions, so that the form, as it were, of transcendent Being might be revealed in them because of their more perfect life.⁷³

Self-knowledge is made available by a mystical seeing of the image of God revealed to the human through the cultivation of virtue. Virtuous activity opens the human to self-knowledge, and, therefore, knowledge of God. This knowledge, as we said before, is not causal. It is as a farm field. God creates the human—the soil; the human tills—disciplines—the body, which opens the human to the seed—Christ—of life, to be continually nurtured by the mingling of lights—divine and human—upon the mirror of the soul. Gregory makes it clear that it is the mysteries of the church that discipline the human to receive

⁶⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Sermon V, *italics mine*.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Sermon X.

⁶⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.167-169.

⁷⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Sermon VIII.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Sermon IV.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Sermon VIII.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Sermon IX.

knowledge of the Good and know herself as a participant in the Good. Virtue—the clothing of the soul—is none other than the actions of the body, which give way to knowledge of the self.⁷⁴ The body is the perfect image of the soul. Gregory here foreshadows Wittgenstein. In his interpretation of the liturgical vestments of the priest, Gregory claims that these are no less than the actions that adorn the soul, “woven by the exercise of the virtues.”⁷⁵

The garments of faith, then, are the actions of the baptized that participate in the sacrificial action of Christ on the cross. This is, says Gregory, what Paul means by *living sacrifice*.⁷⁶ The garment of faith is a participation in the actions that are the eating of the fruit that comes from the tree of life. To put on the garment of sensuous life—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—is to weigh down the soul with that which is thick and heavy, not allowing the human to ascend toward the holy.⁷⁷ One must be careful to understand the nuances that Nyssen makes when he speaks of the sensuous life, however, as Gregory has a great tendency to speak of sensation positively and negatively and does so often in the same sections of his writings.

Sarah Coakley has recently shown how important Gregory of Nyssa is to gaining a cohesive understanding of embodied perceiving.⁷⁸ Directing our attention to Gregory’s important and often overlooked *De anima et resurrectione*, Coakley shows how Nyssen’s robust understanding of knowledge and its acquisition—following the apostle Paul, especially 1 Corinthians 15—occurs through a systematic increase in understanding by a series of sensual purgations.⁷⁹ Coakley’s essay deals largely with Jean Daniélou’s description of Gregory’s ‘doctrine’⁸⁰ of the spiritual senses in his

⁷⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.191.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Sarah Coakley, “Gregory of Nyssa on the Spiritual Senses: A Reconsideration,” in *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity*, eds. Gavrilyuk and Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 36-55.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Coakley sets out to challenge Daniélou’s notion of “doctrine” with regard to the spiritual senses.

influential work, *Platonisme et théologie mystique*.⁸¹ Coakley argues that Daniélou does not therein adequately address the nature of the spiritual senses in relation to epistemology in Gregory, faulting him for his lack of attention to *De anima*. It must be noted that Coakley's accusation against Daniélou's treatment is focused on his earlier work in *Platonisme et théologie mystique*, where he outlines this "doctrine." Coakley does point this out, although not until the final paragraph of the essay, which is a bit misleading. Daniélou does, however, account for this graded elevation of spiritual sense in the introduction to his selected texts from Gregory's writings in *From Glory to Glory*.⁸² Whether Daniélou adequately addresses Gregory's progression of spiritual sensing in his *Platonisme et théologie mystique* is debatable; however, he does address this elsewhere⁸³ and succinctly in his introduction to *From Glory to Glory*, which Coakley curiously does not mention.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Coakley, *Gregory of Nyssa on the Spiritual Senses*, 36-55.

⁸² Daniélou, *From Glory to Glory*, 3-78. Coakley implies that Daniélou's selection and translation of Nyssen's texts in *From Glory to Glory* follow a disjunction of spiritual sense from physical sense; however, given Daniélou's account to the contrary in the introduction, coupled with the selection of the texts that outline this progressive movement in Gregory from sense perception toward spiritual sensibility, I find Coakley's argument unfounded (see especially Daniélou, introduction, 46-56). Perhaps Coakley is correct to point out that Gregory does not have a "doctrine" of spiritual sense; nevertheless, this does not negate Daniélou's otherwise sound treatment of Gregory on sense perception.

⁸³ See Jean Daniélou, *God and the Ways of Knowing* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 187-210, and Jean Daniélou, *The Bible And the Liturgy*. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), especially 19-53, 124-126.

⁸⁴ Daniélou appears to anticipate and respond directly to Coakley's accusation (2012) in his introduction to *From Glory to Glory* (1961). "Indeed Daniélou avers [in *Platonisme et théologie mystique*] that Gregory does not significantly advance on the position of Origen, despite a few characteristic phrases in his *Commentary on the Song* which are novel and distinctive," see Coakley, *Gregory of Nyssa on the Spiritual Senses*, 39; *Platonisme et théologie mystique*, 238-241. However, "responds" Daniélou, while Gregory's doctrine of the spiritual senses is "inherited from Origen [it is] developed quite extensively." See Daniélou, introduction to *From Glory to Glory*, 25. Again, while this may not be explicit in Daniélou's *Platonisme et théologie mystique*, he is otherwise well aware of Gregory's novelty and the importance of the *De anima*. Again, Coakley claims that Daniélou "does not spell out how sensation in the ordinary, physiological sense can become 'spiritual sensation,'" stating that this implies a disjunction in Gregory's own understanding of the mystical experience; however, we find a very telling passage in the *De anima* that may shed more light on this so-called disjunction. "Since, then, the soul becomes godlike when it has put off all the varied impulses of its nature, and when it has passed beyond desire it has entered into that towards which it was previously being raised by desire, *it no longer gives any place in itself either to hope or to memory (italics mine)*. It has what it was hoping for, and it drives out memory from its mind in its occupation with the enjoyment of good things. Thus it imitates the superior life, being conformed to the properties of the divine Nature, so that nothing else is left to it but the disposition of love, as it becomes attached in its nature to the beautiful" (*De anima*, 79-80). This is likely where Maximus derives his claim that "authentic knowledge [is] gained only by actual experience," whereby a "direct perception" supplants "relative knowledge based on

Coakley's reemphasizing of *De anima* is important, as it shows in Gregory an important account of physiological sensation as participating in true wisdom and understanding.⁸⁵ Again, Daniélou does emphasize Gregory's understanding of progressive change as essential to human nature, regarding perfection as a "perpetual progress,"⁸⁶ an "infinite growth,"⁸⁷ a "constant becoming."⁸⁸ This is the purpose of the *garment of skin*, says Daniélou.⁸⁹ Gregory's understanding of the body, as Daniélou underscores, is a corrective to Origen's speculation that the body is a punishment for sin.⁹⁰ Gregory's notion of the *garment of skin*, however, is for the soul's remedy (both following and moving beyond Origen) not its punishment.⁹¹ What Gregory outlines in *De anima* is a spiritual ascent of descent, a luminous darkness, an entering into knowing by way of unknowing, all of which for Gregory is a sort of embodied disembodiment.⁹² As Coakley has shown, Gregory's position here involves delving eternally into darkness through the continuous purifying of human sensibility, whereby the prisoner and the free man, while "very

reason and ideas." See Maximus, "Ambiguum 60" in Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken, trans., *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003). There is no disjunction, here, as Coakley rightly points out, but neither is there in Daniélou's account of Gregory. Rather, it is the paradoxical illumination by darkness and the true vision of not seeing that Gregory expresses. See Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, trans. Malherbe and Ferguson (New York: Paulist Press, 1978) II.162-164, to which Daniélou directs our attention.

⁸⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, trans. Catherine Roth (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), 34.

⁸⁶ Daniélou, introduction, 47.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 54. See also *The Life of Moses*, II.219-255.

⁸⁹ Daniélou, introduction, 11.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, 97-101. As Catherine Roth notes, Macrina denies in this section the "materiality of matter" (99 n.4). See also Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 31-43. Lossky shows how distinct Gregory's understanding of gnosis truly is, differing greatly from Origen (and Evagrius). He also remarks how well aware of this Fr. Daniélou is, describing Gregory to be "passing beyond" Origen in Daniélou's book on Origen. This "luminous darkness" is perhaps nowhere more clear in Gregory than in the *Life of Moses*. By the disciplining of sense perception the human opens the intellective part of her soul to deeper and deeper contemplation of the incomprehensible and thereby sees God in not seeing, see Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.163; see also Rowan Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge*, 62-67, where Williams notes that Daniélou presents Gregory's understanding of the relation between the soul and the senses as "revolutionary," although Williams does appear to be working on a problematic understanding of Platonism—separating sensibility from the souls "celestial journey," a reading of Plato that Coakley rightly reminds is not Platonic.

much alike in body during their lives [come to] differ greatly from each other in their experience of pleasure or pain.”⁹³ This difference is the difference between one disciplined by virtue and another disciplined by the senses.

Some people ascribe to the good part whatever seems pleasant to sense-perception, while others believe that only what appears to the mind both is good and should be so called. Those who have not trained their reasoning and have not examined what is better spend gluttonously in the fleshly life the share of good which is owed to their nature, saving up nothing for the life hereafter. But those who manage their life with critical reasoning and self-control, although in this short life they are distressed by those misfortunes which trouble the senses, yet store up good for the subsequent age, so that the better portion is extended for them throughout their eternal life.⁹⁴

This is the gulf, says Macrina, that is made by “the decisions of human lives divided towards opposite choices.”⁹⁵ The senses, while they are part of this purifying journey of the soul, are nevertheless to be on the *passive* side of the souls activity. This “passivity” is clearer in *The Life of Moses*, wherein Gregory continuously emphasizes the role of free will in the human’s elevation to virtue or descent to vice. It is the activity of the human’s free will

⁹³ Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, 120. For Gregory, this growth is eternal. At no point is the darkness surpassed; rather, each natural growth of the human in Christ is a growth that continually reveals the absolute transcendence of the God who is at once fully present to the human but so vast that all one can hope for is a deeper awareness that knowledge of God can never be exhausted or fully acquired; see Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, 87; *The Life of Moses*, II.162-169.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 71. See also Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.157. In *The Life of Moses*, Gregory makes the more clear distinction between rational and irrational animals, whereby the irrational animals are those governed solely by sense perception, divorced from rationality. Following Gregory, we might say that understanding is gained through rational appropriation of the senses, which leads to spiritual sense, but apart from the intellective faculty the spirited and appetitive leave the soul to be trampled upon by insatiable passions (II.94-96, 154-158).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* This understanding of decision or choice is, again, found throughout Gregory’s *The Life of Moses*, see especially II.70-88. “We have in ourselves, in our own nature and by our own choice, the causes of light and darkness, since we place ourselves in whichever sphere we wish to be” (II.80). Gregory makes a distinction throughout *The Life of Moses* regarding what is “within” human nature and what comes to it from the outside. The cause of light or virtue is within, part of the fabric of human nature, while the cause of darkness or vice comes from the outside, although through an exercise of free will, which is within.

that conditions her toward a sensitivity or insensitivity to virtue.⁹⁶ Gregory here refers to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart by God. Pharaoh's resistance to the divine will, says Gregory, is not caused by God; rather, Pharaoh resists God because he has inclined his sensibilities to evil and is thereby hardened to the "word that softens resistance."⁹⁷

It is here that Coakley's (re)assessment is of utmost importance. Her concern is that any disjunction between epistemology and spirituality in Gregory of Nyssa is a failure to see "an emerging and developing sense of the significance of bodily life for 'spiritual sensation'."⁹⁸ This union is perhaps clearer, however, in Gregory's discussion of the soul in *The Life of Moses*. Gregory follows an Aristotelian classification of the tripartite soul (vegetative, sensitive, and rational).⁹⁹ For Gregory, the soul is as the doorpost of the Hebrew in Egypt, which received the blood of the lamb to protect the virtue within.¹⁰⁰ The upper doorpost is the rational part; the side posts of the entrance are the vegetative and sensitive ("appetitive" and "spirited").¹⁰¹ The rational part keeps the side posts from evil thoughts, while the appetitive and spirited free the upper doorpost more and more to greater illumination.¹⁰² There is a strong sense of reciprocity in Gregory's understanding of the relation between each part of the soul, whereby the each in its own way protects the other, all for the sake of participating in the divine life. This is also in keeping with Gregory's strong sense that Divinity is manifest to the degree that the human is capable of receiving.¹⁰³ What is most telling, however, with regard to Gregory's understanding of the senses in their participation in the human's ever progressing spiritual sensibility, is how he describes what is most natural to human desire with regard to physiological sensation, most notably in his description of the "stomach's nature."

⁹⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.86-87.

⁹⁷ Ibid., II.76. Gregory's point here is that God cannot be the cause of any evil or the source of evil. Rather, nothing evil exists apart from human generation by an act of the will (II.88).

⁹⁸ Coakley, *Gregory of Nyssa on the Spiritual Senses*, 52.

⁹⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.96, 169 n.116.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., II.89-101.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., II.96.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., II.119.

Even if much more were prepared than is needed, it is not in the stomach's nature to exceed its proper measure or to be stretched by the insatiate desire for what is prepared.¹⁰⁴

What is natural to human nature, even to the stomach, is to have what is needed; it is not to be filled through insatiable greed, moving human nature toward what is unnatural, for excess and hoarding lead only to covetousness.¹⁰⁵ This continual progress in virtue—the disciplining of the side posts of the soul—is the realignment of the senses to the spiritual sensation of the rational faculty, which leads to that eternal Sabbath.¹⁰⁶ There is surely no division between epistemology and spirituality to be found in Gregory; rather, it is the epistemological alignment with spiritual sense that leads the human toward her true nature, whereby the soul by virtuous activity reweaves the body to suit its true nature.¹⁰⁷

The difficulty with Gregory is the lack of specificity with regard to spiritual sense, coupled with his continued back and forth use of “flesh,” “garment,” and “sense,” as there is no uniform employment of these terms. If only he were as clear as John of Damascus who, perhaps clarifying Gregory on the matter of spiritual sense, is more to the point. The Damascene discusses the goal of each person bringing their mind to see the beatific vision,

which means to be guided by their sense perceptions up to that which is beyond all sense perception and comprehension, which is He who is the Author and Maker and Creator of all. ‘For by the beauty of his own creatures the creator is by analogy discovered,’ and ‘the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.’¹⁰⁸

This is Gregory's point as well, which is again clearer in *The Life of Moses*, that the spiritual senses are not separable from the physical; rather, spiritual

¹⁰⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.142.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., II.143.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., II.191.

¹⁰⁸ John of Damascus, “Philosophical Chapters,” I, in Frederic Hathaway Chase, Jr., trans., *Saint John of Damascus: Writings* (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1958).

sense is the transcendental nature of the physical sense, the garment God provides for the attainment of beatific vision, which is one's stepping into the dark cloud in order to comprehend the incomprehensible by realizing the insurmountability of God. For Gregory, as with John of Damascus, one who attends to the spiritual life is borne by sense perception to the Good.¹⁰⁹ Gregory's deepest concern is to secure a right apprehension of Being.¹¹⁰ God has given the human the garment of skin so that she might put on the garment of obedience and thereby rightly apprehend Being, which is true knowledge.¹¹¹ This occurs through sense perception, for it is only through the senses that the human is capable of perception;¹¹² however, once the human recognizes the truth of her subsistent relation to God it is then, through sense perception, that the spiritual senses are activated, as it were, to know God alone as existence himself—beyond sense perception. This “flight” from the senses does not leave sense perception behind; rather, the human knows herself as contingent when she has become aware of her perception as physiologically conditioned and thereby attends to the One whose perceiving is self-contingent, unchanged by nothing external—God. (Ironically for Gregory, attending to the passions of the body is more akin to a flight from sense perception, as the senses are given that the human might realize her contingent relation to God—her *natural nature*.¹¹³ The senses are given as a bride-companion for the human's ascending of the mountain.¹¹⁴)

¹⁰⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.6-8. Gregory describes the waters that carry Moses down the Nile, which toss him too and fro; however, because of “education” Moses is “naturally” thrust onto firm ground. What is natural is transformed by human education or discipline to the Good, re-creating (with God) the natural to divine purposes. For Gregory, the human is her own mid-wife, giving birth to her true self through the disciplining of sense perception that raises the human, not beyond herself, per se, but toward herself.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, II.23.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* Again, Gregory teeters back and forth here with “garment.” The garment of skin is at once the “garment of disobedience” and God's gift to the human to attain the garment of obedience. The discipline of virtue is the garment of obedience, which is acquired by the human through the active manifesting of the truth of Being in one's body.

¹¹² Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.25.

¹¹³ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 1084D.

¹¹⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.157.

IV

The understanding of spiritual sensibility outlined above is an awareness of human perception conditioned and informed by one's participation in the life of God in the world. Aligning human perception to spiritual sensibility entails, as aforesaid, a becoming in likeness to what the human subject is as created in the image of God. It should come as no surprise, then, that the fathers of the church, evidenced most notably with Gregory of Nyssa, understood this virtuous ascent to be a continuous revealing of who God is and how God relates to creation. How the human relates to God and all others is to be analogous to the inter-relatedness of the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

What it means for God to be God, following the early fathers of the church, is to exist as a mutual adoration and service of inter-Trinitarian self-offering. That is, the Son is the eternal worship of the Father and the Father of the Son, and both of the Spirit and the Spirit of Father and Son.¹¹⁵ The Persons of the Trinity relate one to another in mutual obedience and penetration of love in the giving of the Son to the Father and the Father to the Son, which is the reciprocal giving and receiving in and of the self-same Spirit. God hereby lacks nothing, not even his own worship.¹¹⁶ The mutually submissive Persons of the One Substance offer to one another their distinctive selfhoods. The Father's giving of himself to the Son and the Son's receiving of the Father is the shared gift that is the Spirit. Reciprocal love and mutual submission occurs in the Son's return to the Father and the Father's reception of the Son, which is the gift-giving, active-being that is the same Spirit. The eternal Person of the Spirit names the endless procession of the giving and receiving of God from and through himself in the Personhoods of Father and Son.

The subsisting persons of the Trinity give to each their own property, receiving from the other the same. Each Person of the Trinity, then, knows itself only in light of its being-known by each subsisting Person. The Father knows himself as Father only to the extent that the Son knows the Father as *his* Father. Likewise, the Son knows himself as Son only to the extent that the

¹¹⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.vii.3.

¹¹⁶ Pierre Berulle is known as having stated that God lacks only his own worship. However, as Irenaeus reminds, even this is complete and not lacking in the Godhead. See note above.

Father knows the Son as *his* Son. This knowing is made possible by the Spirit who, following Augustine, separates the Father to know the Son as Son and for the Son to know the Father as Father. One receives Personhood—identity—in being-known by the other subsisting Persons.

With Maximus Confessor, the elevation of grace over nature discloses how it is that this knowledge is made available to humanity. It is through grace that the human comes to know her true nature,¹¹⁷ as one cannot arrive at this knowledge by any other way save the divine illumination of the Spirit.¹¹⁸ For the human to know herself as human she must, through grace, come to know her nature in being-known by the eternal Son.¹¹⁹

The one who knows the meaning of the mystery and who is so incessantly lifted up both in work and in word through all things until he acquires what is sent down to him is likewise a messenger of the great plan of God... [Christ] underwent in himself through the incarnation as man our future destiny. Let the one who is moved by a love of knowledge mystically rejoice in learning of the great destiny he has promised to those who love the Lord.¹²⁰

The human's identity rests in its being-known by Mind,¹²¹ thereby learning of her subsistent nature, having been moved *beyond* her own nature by grace. Grace transforms human nature, not into something unnatural, but into what is at once so deeply and thoroughly human that it is more than human because it engages all of nature with the same gracious reciprocity that God the Son has engaged human nature. The knower realizes herself as a participant in the grace that gathers her into the perichoretic relation, whereby the subject-object relation coalesces in divine unity. The Father is not the subject whose object is the Son, nor is the Son a subject whose object is the Father, and neither is the Spirit to Father or Son. Subject-object relations qualify the temporal

¹¹⁷ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, II.21.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, II.24.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, II.60.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, II.23-24.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, II.22.

exchanges between created beings.¹²² Humans are divisible, whereas God is complete oneness.¹²³ The Persons of the Holy Trinity do not name divisibility within the Godhead, but rather bespeak the mysterious nature of eternal erotic-knowing.

The human gains such knowledge through the Son's descent. But to know the Son the human must first know this eternal Person as flesh. In knowing the Word made flesh the human comes to know the eternal nature of God the Son. This knowing, however, first comes through the human's being-known as flesh¹²⁴ by the all knowing eternal One. Knowledge—God—makes *himself* knowable through his being-known to *himself* as both human and divine. God hereby knows *himself* as God by nature, fully and eternally complete, yet by grace knows *himself* in being-known to himself as divine-human permeation. Human nature is received into the perichoretic relation in the Christ's mutually permeating natures. For the human not to know herself in light of God's own self-knowing, then, is to neither know God nor oneself. *Created in the image of God* is revealed only in *the Image—Christ*, the *mutual communication* that God makes available by *his* being-known. God is his own being-known, as it were, who receives his identity from *himself* through *his* own love and offering of *himself* to *himself*. God knows *himself* only as *he* is known by *himself*.¹²⁵

The life of God is not that which unfolds in time; rather, the life of God gathers time into God's own being-known. Love is not deposited into humanity or creation. These and all things are gathered into Love and only in this sense can there be love. Accordingly, created love is always in some

¹²² This, it must be remembered, is a recent development in human history, articulated in the late 14th Century when the human becomes a "subject" whose experiences are subjective rather than collective. The field of knowledge is altered forever. Such knowing is made possible only by way creating an ontological division between corporeal and incorporeal realms. Eric Voegelin argues that this begins to happen ideologically with the shift from pantheism to Christian monotheism during the reign of Theodosius in the late 4th and early 5th Centuries. He remarks that Celsus criticized Christianity, stating that it brought with it a "de-divinization" of the world. By destroying the local divinities of each culture Christianity destroyed national and local culture. See Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics, an Introduction*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), Chapter 3.

¹²³ Maximus, "Ambiguum 7," in Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken, trans., *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003) 7.4.

¹²⁴ PG 44.804A-808B.

¹²⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, iv.6.3-6.7 (ANF).

sense passive. Only God is active Love, for God *is* Love. Love does demand willed participation of the created in uncreated Love.¹²⁶ Only in this sense can human action be understood. Human activity can be both willed and unwilled; it can be for good or evil; and it can rejoice in Christ who makes all action intelligible or it can negate the truth of Christ.

Situating this dialogue of love in the context of friendship with God clarifies Aristotle's rejection of human capacity for friendship with God. Aristotle is precisely correct: friendship with God is impossible.¹²⁷ Only God can love and know God! "Depart from me for I never knew you,"¹²⁸ could be read as Jesus' declaration of this fact. What does not participate in the love of God in Christ is not assimilated to Christ, and, therefore, is *unknown* to God. God cannot love what is not united—assimilated—to the Son. This is exactly what Clement of Alexandria is getting at when he speaks of perichoresis.

God in Christ assimilates human nature to himself that the human might participate in the love of God, in the eternal friendship God is. It is here that Aquinas both rightly and wrongly employs Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. For Aristotle, God is absolutely transcendent, and because friendship requires community such a bond is impossible between what is unchangeable and what is changeable. God himself is subsistent thought; he cannot think outside himself. That is, God cannot think not-God. This is Clement's whole point. Yes, God cannot think not-God, which is why creation must be understood as always existing as a portion of God and within God, such that the changeable—created life, eternally being changed into God. The changeable enters into subsistence with the unchanging at creation. This inherent lovability of God's portion within human nature is the dignity of the human.

It is with John of Damascus that this perichoretic subsisting gains its full force. Drawing on Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil the Great, Denys the Aeoropogite, Maximus, and others, the Damascene weaves

¹²⁶ "Demand," here, is to be understood as a sort of non-compulsory compulsion, whereby love is absolutely free in its giving but receiving the free Love God *is* requires a return—a non-identical reciprocal engagement.

¹²⁷ Aristotle, "Metaphysics," VIII.4-7, X.7, in Jonathan Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol. II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), XII.7.

¹²⁸ Matthew 7.23.

together the finest of thread from each of the great theologians. For John, when the Father, who is the primal cause of all things, speaks, his spoken Word subsists with him.

Because our nature is mortal and subject to dissolution, for this reason our speech is non-subsistent. But, since God is existing always and is perfect, His Word must be always existing, living, perfect, distinctly subsistent, and having all things that His Begetter has. Now, our speech in proceeding from our mind is not entirely distinct from it. For, in so far as it comes from the mind, it is something distinct from it; whereas, in so far as it reveals the mind itself, it is not entirely distinct from it. Actually, it is identical with it in nature while distinct from it in its subject. Similarly, the Word of God, in so far as He subsists in Himself, is distinct from Him from whom He has His subsistence. But, since He exhibits in Himself those same things which are discerned in God, then in His nature He is identical with God. For, just as perfection in all things is to be found in the Father, so is it also to be found in the Word begotten of Him.¹²⁹

Unlike created persons, whose words dissolve in their speaking, the Person of the Son subsists and is differentiated from him from whom he derives subsistence. The Son is begotten by the Father through the procession of the Spirit. It is the Spirit that resides “between the unbegotten and begotten, and [is] united to the Father through the Son.”¹³⁰ The Spirit hereby subsists eternally with both Father and Son,

a substantial power found in its own individuating personality, proceeding from the Father, coming to rest in the Word and declaring Him, not separated from God in essence or from the Word with whom it is associated, having might, not dissipated away into non-existence, but distinctly subsistent like the Word—living, endowed with will, self-moving, active, at all

¹²⁹ John of Damascus, *Orthodox Faith*, i.6.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, i.13.

times willing good, exercising His power for the prosecution of every design in accordance with His will, without beginning and without end. For the Word fell short of the Father in nothing, and the Spirit did not fall short of the Word in anything.¹³¹

The Spirit is the eternal differentiating bond with whom the Father and Son subsist and *are* Reciprocity—eternal, erotic being-known.

In speaking, the Father gives the Son his Sonship. This giving is the Spirit, who receives its Spiritship in the procession from the Father through the Word's return to its cause—the Father. It is in this begetting and proceeding that the Father knows himself as Father. The Son's receiving of his Sonship from the Father and his return to the Father makes known to the Spirit his identity as gift-giving-giver—as the procession from the Father to the Son and through the Son as return to the Father. This eternal knowing of the subsisting Persons of the Godhead in no way alters or surprises either Person. Reciprocal knowing is who God is.

It is this knowing that occurs in the incarnate relation of the two natures of Christ. The Son, in uniting divinity and humanity in Jesus through the Spirit, permeates human nature with divinity. This permeation of the human nature *causes* Jesus to know himself only as subsisting in the eternal relation that is Father, Spirit, Son. Christ's human nature in turn permeates divinity by God the Son's entering into relation with human nature.¹³² And, just as Jesus hereby knows himself by divine permeation, so also does the Son know himself in relation to the subsisting human nature of Jesus. This is a mutual communication, says John of Damascus, “each nature communicates its own properties to the other through the identity of their person and their mutual immanence.”¹³³ It is the “mutual immanence” of the Son of God (divinity) and the Son of Man (humanity) that names the entrance of the human into the eternal knowing of either Persons of the Triune God with the

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, i.7. See also Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, II.20-25, from which it appears that John of Damascus draws.

¹³² This language is following John of Damascus, Son of God as Divinity qua Divinity, Son of Man as Human Nature qua Human Nature.

¹³³ John of Damascus, *Orthodox Faith*, iii.4.

other two subsisting, eternal Persons. God graciously refuses to know *himself* apart from his being-known by the human nature of Christ. That is, God refuses to know *himself* as Trinity apart from the incorporation of humanity into subsistent, eternal interpenetration, for though the divine action and permeation precedes human permeation of the divine, it permeates divinity nonetheless, and both without confusion.

Christ, the union of the Word of God and human flesh, is the revelation of both the equality of the Divine Persons of the Trinity and the drawing of humanity into erotic knowing. John of Damascus tirelessly makes this point throughout his *De Fide Orthodoxa*. He examines the union and distinction of the two natures within the one person, Jesus. The flesh of Christ is permeated by divinity, which enables his human nature to enter into reciprocation with the divine—to permeate divinity as well.

Because of the hypostatic union the flesh is said to have been deified, to have become God and of the same divinity with the word; at the same time God the Word is said to have been made flesh, to have become man, to be declared a creature and called last. This is not because the two natures were transformed into one compound nature—it is impossible for contradictory natural qualities to exist together in one nature—but because they were hypostatically united and indwell mutually one in the other without confusion or transformation. The mutual indwelling, however, did not come from the flesh, but from the divinity, because it is inconceivable that the flesh should indwell the divinity—rather, at once the divine nature indwelt the flesh, it gave the flesh this same ineffable mutual indwelling, which, indeed, we call union.¹³⁴

However, humanity, unlike the subsisting persons of the Trinity, though marked by divinity with the *imago Dei* (internal), nevertheless receives this permeating capacity from the Creator (external); the permeability of the

¹³⁴ John of Damascus, *Orthodox Faith*, 4.18.

created is not generative but derivative.¹³⁵ Human nature must receive the deifying grace of the Holy Spirit, that which substantiates the union of the unconfused natures of Christ. It is hereby that God can be both eternally impassible and yet procure salvation through a passible body.¹³⁶ This mutual permeation does not, however, elicit change in the Godhead. The begetting of the Son does not come as a surprise to the Father; rather, the erotic knowing as known by the second hypostasis is an eternal event in God. Permeation as well is not to be understood as a new occurrence but rather names the very state of creation in its continually being-created. Human nature is gathered into triune reciprocity through the cross on that eternal day of creation. Humankind is by nature, then, a participant in erotic knowing, which is the *created in the image of God*. The human is designed for the mutual permeation essential to its nature, the realization of this endowment of grace as *created in the image of God*, however, occurs through a willed becoming in likeness by the non-compulsory participation in compulsory grace.

Humanity comes to understand this, says John of Damascus, through Christ's full embrace of human nature. Though the sayings and actions of Jesus seem to confuse the shared life of the Son with the Father, one is made to understand that the seemingly contradictory words of Jesus, most notably the cry from the cross, are solely for the efficacy of human understanding.¹³⁷ They are not, as the Damascene makes clear, to be understood as revealing some kind of hidden knowledge the Father has to which the Son is not privy, nor as an accusation by the Son against the Father. God's forsaking of God on the cross reveals the eternal constituting of humanity in kenotic reciprocity. God empties himself to assimilate divinity to humanity, which establishes

¹³⁵ John of Damascus, *Orthodox Faith*, 4.18. John continues to delicately walk this tightrope as to how God is penetrated by creation, making the clear point that it is God who initiates contact. Because it is God who initiates the relation it is God who permeates God from creation, which enables creation to enjoy the inter-communal permeation of the divine life through volitive participation, but such participation is always secondary to the inter-action of God's own self-relating that creation is assimilated to by Christ. "The mutual indwelling," he says, "did not come from the flesh, but from the divinity..." for when "the divine nature indwelt the flesh, it gave the flesh this same ineffable mutual indwelling, which, indeed, we call union."

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

humanity in divinity. This is the wisdom of Athanasius: “God became what we were so we might become what he is.”

This knowledge, or more appropriately *way of knowing*, is not to be reduced to a perspectival understanding whereby liturgy is a didactic, habit forming ritual that grants the human a new way of seeing the tree in the forest. Rather, it is an ontological, transelementing of human nature that opens the knower to an engagement with all things in the same manner that God in Christ has opened himself to the vulnerability of divine-human permeation.¹³⁸ It is knowledge by contact, by participation in the being-known of God. As God in Christ refuses to know *himself* as Trinity apart from the Son’s assimilation to human nature, likewise through liturgy is the human made to reject any form of existence that relieves her from the mutual binding of the whole of humanity in Christ. It is true that even the tree will look different according to this *way of knowing*, as every tree becomes for the Christian that which points beyond itself to the true tree that was once stained by the blood of God. The cross grants to the tree its transformed nature as something that extends human life, and inasmuch as it does extend human life it is a type. To the extent that a tree is not used to extend life for humanity, it ceases to abide analogously. Any element of creation that is used against its transelementation in Christ—used not to extend the life of humanity—is sin.¹³⁹ This *way of knowing* is the human’s participation in becoming what God is, made possible, as Athanasius taught, by virtue of God’s becoming what the human is.

In Christ, the Spirit fuses together humanity and divinity in subsistent, eternal, reciprocity of permeating knowledge, whereby either is known only in its being-known in the Spirit by the other subsisting Person. The entrance of human nature into subsistent relation does not, however, establish a kind of

¹³⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, “Commentary on John,” 96b-97b, in Norman Russell, trans., *Cyril of Alexandria* (London: Routledge, 2000).

¹³⁹ I will not get into theodicy here and describe what this might mean for tsunamis, earthquakes, or other natural disasters; it is only to say that all of creation has been transformed by the cross of Christ, which exacts a particular form of human engagement with the whole of creation. A base example of this would be to say that any arrow made from the wood of a tree, if it is used to pierce the body of a man it does not participate in the *way of knowing* into which Christ has incorporated the world. If a tree is cut down to provide wood for the fire upon which meat will be cooked and prepared for a family, the tree is participating in its truth (though the vegan might disagree).

demigod or fourth hypostasis of the Trinity. Human nature enters into subsistence with the Second Hypostasis of the Trinity—assimilation. Following, as either Person of the triune God subsists in the other, and as the action of one is ascribed to all,¹⁴⁰ humanity subsists in the Father and Spirit, assimilated, as it is, to the Son. The Father, then, does not simply know himself as Father of the eternal Son with whom he subsists, but knows himself as Father in relation to the assimilated natures of Christ, both human and divine. Through the eternal Son, the Father is united with humanity, and likewise the Spirit,¹⁴¹ as the subsisting Persons remain one divinity, assimilated without confusion to human nature.

This ontological identity of humanity as expressed by the fathers of the church is made available in and sustained by the liturgical action. Liturgy creates and sustains humanity—the human as participant in the being-known of God through the Liturgy-Christ. Its particular form breeds a particular people. Liturgy is theology, and theology is liturgy. That is, *lex orandi, lex credendi, est lex credendi, lex orandi*.¹⁴² However, this claim is only to be understood in the specific sense that the liturgical action is that which constitutes theology—the conditions for doing theology, as it were. Likewise, credo or theological articulation are irreducible to mere words apart from their liturgical constitution—theological articulation as always arising out of the *body schema* of the Church.

To believe is to know through action. Action precedes thought. Action makes thought possible. As Aquinas says regarding faith and action,

Just as man accends to first principles, by the natural light of his intellect, so does a virtuous man, by the habit of virtue, judge aright of things concerning that virtue.¹⁴³

As created, humankind is endowed with a natural light, an innate ability to think and reflect on that which crosses one's path. Nevertheless, to judge

¹⁴⁰ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 97c-e.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 96d-e.

¹⁴² This will be explored further in chapter three regarding liturgy as theology and theology as liturgy. In each instance, whether it is the rule of prayer and faith or liturgical action and theological articulation, each are capable of being differentiated but must always be understood as inseparable parts of a whole way of being and becoming.

¹⁴³ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II.2.4.

aright is to participate in that which is judged. With regard to knowing the truth of faith, this is acquired only through a supernatural participation in Divine goodness.¹⁴⁴ Within the liturgical economy knowing does not occur abstractly. Knowledge is not ethereal but occurs through material engagement with the God who transubstantiates himself in bread and wine and transelements human nature through assimilating human nature to *himself*.¹⁴⁵ This is the knowledge Paul refers to that occurs through participation in the sufferings of Christ and being made like him in his death (Philippians 3). Character and cognition go hand in hand.

This is most explicit in the Letter to the Hebrews, where the writer states clearly that it is the disciplined child of God, the one who pursues peace with everyone, the one who lives the life of holiness, she is the one who “will see the Lord.”¹⁴⁶ To see God is to see the Lord made manifest in the actions of holy disciplines. It is a knowledge that inebriates the senses with the passion of Christ, participation in which brings the human to know her true self as Christ’s christ.¹⁴⁷

Conclusion

Liturgy is *the* epistemological crisis for the human, the true ontological manifesting of her actuality in the being-known of God—triune, reciprocal penetration. In Christ—*the* Liturgy—knowledge and Being co-inhere. Christ is Liturgy par excellence, by whom, with whom, and in whom all human action is intelligible.

All the thoughts, words, and deeds of humanity are made plain in the hypostatic union of Christ.¹⁴⁸ This is true whether the words spoken are in common conversations among friends in a cafe or in a prayer of thanksgiving offered in church. All speaking is verbal activity that expresses one’s understanding of God and how they understand God to relate to the world.

¹⁴⁴ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II.2.4.

¹⁴⁵ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 96b-97b.

¹⁴⁶ Hebrews 12.14.

¹⁴⁷ Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 14.

¹⁴⁸ Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, 116-131. This “making plain” is to suggest that Christ, the subsistent speaking of God, is the interpretive form by which all speech-acts and ideas are to be understood.

One might argue that some conversations bear no meaning, as the words may have nothing to do with anything godly or of consequence. However, even if a conversation shared between two persons has no particular end, the speaking and the words spoken are intimately bound up with the other, and it is the use of the words—the manner of speaking—and the nature of the relationship between the two persons involved that bear the weight of each word's meaning.¹⁴⁹ That is, words are never mere words.¹⁵⁰ Language is use; Christ, here, the Word of God, is the paradigm for all speech, and, therefore, the paradigm for all human action, especially as it pertains to the liturgical action that gathers all human action into hypostatic union with the Son as an offering to the Father. Such speaking-made-known-by-action, here, construes all thought in accordance with their co-inherence. The convergence of word and deed in Christ, then, makes known to all creation what God *thinks* of creation. That is, the hypostatic union Christ is makes known the purpose and will of God for creation. Christ reveals what God knows in the how of God's knowing. The *what* is in the *how*.

Human self-knowledge, then, is located neither in a person's activity nor in her linguistic articulation; rather, human identity is located in the hypostatic speaking God is in Christ. Nevertheless, human action is not inconsequential, but bears consequence solely because of the hypostatic union with the hypostasis of the eternal Son. While *being* is not acquired or

¹⁴⁹ There is a telos inscribed upon the human; this telos is environmental, social, economic, etc., which conditions each person's speech—a speaking that is, as it were, already spoken by conditioned habits engaged in and imposed upon the human. This will become clearer later with Merleau-Ponty. It is, however, to show that what Merleau-Ponty refers to as “intersubjective being” is precisely the inability of the human to privilege her perception over another, but must admit that meaning is always conditioned and intersubjective, rendering speech implicitly an articulation of being, the being what enacts and is enacted by, verbalized as a painter paints a painting—always bearing more on the canvas than she is capable of realizing in the moment of the act, for she bears her world upon the work of art. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. James M. Edie (Chicago: Northwestern, 1964), 18-21.

¹⁵⁰ See Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 390. “Philosophical theories give organized expression to concepts and theories already embodied in forms of practice and types of community.” Words are tangible. It is the audible articulation of that which is already inaudibly articulated by the (social) body.

actualized in human activity¹⁵¹ it remains true that it is in action that the human receives knowledge of her being as a logos of the Logos.¹⁵²

God and man are paradigms one of another... as much as God is humanized to man through love for mankind, so much is man able to be deified to God through love, and that as much as man is caught up by God to what is known in his mind, so much does man manifest God, who is invisible by nature, through the virtues.¹⁵³

Christ, in whom act and being are indivisible, is the human's eternal actualization. Liturgy, hereby, is not an event wherein human actuality is momentarily made present, such that by the Eucharistic exchange a person is who she is and post-digestion falls once again to sub-human levels. Rather, because of the eternal event Christ is, the human's being is already complete—fully actualized in Christ, and her participation in liturgical reciprocity with the Son is a becoming who she already is—who she is in Christ. She is ontologically complete, though epistemologically limited by her bodily construed reality. As Maximus affirms, it is the life of virtue that manifests this knowledge to the practitioner. For what is known of God to the human mind comes through virtuous actions—liturgy.

¹⁵¹ Rowan Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge*. (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1998), 25.

¹⁵² Maximus, "Difficulty 10," 1113A-D, in Andrew Louth, trans., *Maximus the Confessor* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

3 Being-in-the-Liturgy

"What is a man, but his thoughts and loves?"

– St. Augustine of Hippo

"I am the space, where I am."

– Noel Arnaud

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I outlined what it means for the church to say that she believes in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Accordingly, I have taken seriously what it means for God to be God—self-contingent, lacking nothing, *actus purus*, etc. What I have shown, and what is central to this thesis, is that God's absolute self-contingency entails that God has no lack, not even of his own worship. The divine economy is, therefore, the eternal act of self-giving and mutual constituting of the three *hypostases* of the one *ousia*, Christ the self-communication of Eros by the hypostatic union of God the Son with human nature, and the hypostatic union as that which assimilates humanity to the divine economy of eternal reciprocal love.

This unconfused union of God and humanity is implicit to creation—the human as *icon* of the *Icon*. What it means to be human—*imago Dei*—is first and foremost to be a participant in the self-giving of inter-Trinitarian love. Working through human knowing as proscribed by Gregory of Nyssa, I have shown that self-knowledge as divinely contingent occurs through a particular gazing upon God. This gaze is the active self-knowing of the human as inherently divine, an awareness that is acquired through a likeness of habit to the rigorous way of Christ, whereby the human knows as she is known-by God in the reciprocal movement of divine self-offering. That is, the human knows herself only in relation to God's own self-knowing, having been

incorporated in the procession and return of God from and to himself by hypostatic union with the Son. Human nature is hereby received into and made one with the perichoretic dynamism of the Holy Trinity—permeated by God to permeate God *as* God.

The divine contingency of human nature also implies a certain sense of becoming. It is to suggest that the human is always becoming who she already is, eternally recapitulated in Christ. Expressing the truth of the human's eternal actualization in her hypostatic assimilation to God the Son has been the painstaking work of the early church. As we have seen, it is a complex articulation of human epistemology that co-inheres ontologically with her eternal actualization in Christ. As I have argued, the liturgical action as a participation in Christ's singular prayer and sacrifice—his *Liturgy for the life of the world*—is that which instigates and conceives within the human subject a self-knowledge that is implicit to her proximate relation to Christ. It is a knowledge by contact, involving an epistemological crisis whereby the human manifests to herself who she is by eliciting her true nature through liturgical activity that at once exceeds and completes her nature.

This tension of inherent being and excessive being is implicit to the liturgies of the early and medieval church. When the earliest Christians gathered together for worship, they did not understand themselves to be merely handing down a set of practices and customs to be made normative for generations to come; rather, they knew themselves to be making available the same fullness of life that God in Christ makes available in his incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection. As such, liturgy makes-manifest the creator God who gathers the human into eternal, triune reciprocity. However, as the essence of the human and God are not the same, and as God absolutely transcends creation, the reciprocal relation of the human with God is not an absolute reciprocity as it is in the Triune Community.¹ Liturgy, rather, is a participation in the particular *form of knowing* that *is* the perichoretic life of the Trinity, whereby the participant comes to manifest her identity to herself in a kind of gnostic epiphany.² The knowledge that is made available is bound

¹ Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, 99-131.

² Gnostic in the specific sense that Irenaeus speaks of as Gnostic. That is, as a full sensory relation where God moves one beyond a mere bodily or spiritual experience so to encapsulate

up together with Eucharistic reciprocity, such that knowledge is only true when it is knowledge as communion *with* God. This manifesting is that of the speaking God, whose Word is heard, smelled, seen, touched, and tasted in the church's liturgical action. The knowledge available in, by and through the church's liturgy, therefore, is entrenched in the most tangible way of human knowing: the body. Bodily participation in prayer, procession, and the ingesting of Christ reveals the formative knowing of worship as direct encounter with God—the *communicatio idiomatum*. This, however, is not to be understood as a “mediating” event of a divine substance to the human for her consumption. This would reduce the engagement to an exchange of goods. Rather, as Alexander Schmemmann points out, this form of mediating the divine blessing is that which defines the Temple offerings of the ancient Hebrews not the liturgy of the early Christians.³ The inaccessibility of the Holy of Holies restricts divinity to a momentary encounter with the human, such that the oblation ritual serves as a kind of event within an event, one that never quite materializes. God does not communicate *with* the human towards her transformation; rather, God through mediating priests communicates *to* the human her judgment, in the manner of a judge upon his transcendent throne passes sentence. In *exchange* for human sin God hereby grants pardon. Temple mediation is a radical objectification of God by the human subject and the same of the human by God as subject. Each perform a unilateral *exchange*, remaining untouched by the other, such that neither human nor God experience their objectivity, only each's radical subjectivity and the other objectified.

In the previous chapter, we discussed the early church's liturgical sensibilities as a participatory movement *with* the life of worship inherent to

the whole of a person beyond one's “natural” state. For further reading on this, see Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge*, 22-46. We will later see how Maximus presses this in his *Mystagogy*, describing the Church as the image of God by virtue of its shared activity by “imitation and in figure.”

³ Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1966), 99-103. Schmemmann does not argue that the Temple sacrifices are a way of conjuring God; rather, what Schmemmann suggests is that the Temple mediation of the Old Covenant is such that God and the Hebrew remains disconnected. They do not exist in a porous relation, as it were, but are in a sense buffered by the animal sacrifice. In other words, the Temple mediation mediates something other than God to the human or the human to God; whereas Christian Eucharist is both the self-offering of God for the human and the self-offering of the human as a participation in God's own self-offering.

the Trinity. The perichoretic economy is that which emanates from liturgical praxis, which makes way for a theological reasoning that is intensely *descriptive*, in the specific sense of articulating the *what* embedded in the *how* of liturgy.⁴ That is, there is an inherent logic to the liturgy that calls out for words.⁵ One must be careful to qualify what Schmemmann's means by theology as "descriptive," as it cannot be so neatly separated as a category for investigation. Schmemmann presses for a "wholeness," which he claims to have been broken by centuries of "Western captivity."⁶ It would be wrong to argue in Schmemmann for a kind of liturgical primacy. He (over)emphasizes the act of liturgy to compensate for what he would call a Western, theological scrutiny that separates the two.

To affirm that liturgy is the source *par excellence* of theology does not mean, as some seem to think, a reduction of theology to liturgy, its transformation into "liturgical theology." The latter appeared only as result of the unhealthy mutual alienation between theology and liturgy, and is therefore an illegitimate child of an illegitimate situation. All theology, indeed, ought to be "liturgical," yet not in the sense of having liturgy as its unique "object" of study, but in that of having as its ultimate term of reference in the faith of the Church, as manifested and communicated in the liturgy....⁷

Theology must, then, find its way back to its initial wholeness and disabuse both liturgist and theologian that they can be either one or the other. Liturgy is always the speaking of a theology and theology is always spoken out of one's liturgical constitution or conditioning. Liturgy and theology hereby co-inhere; they exist together or not at all, without the conflation of one into the other.

⁴ It is here that Alexander Schmemmann is helpful. Faith, says Schmemmann, is an experience: "...the total and living experience of the Church, that constitutes the source and the context of theology in the East, of that theology at least which characterized the patristic age. It is 'description' more than 'definition' for it is, above all, a search for words and concepts adequate to and expressive of the living experience of the church—for *reality* and not 'propositions'," Alexander Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979), 133-134.

⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 52-97.

⁶ Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission*, 140.

⁷ *Ibid.*

As shown in chapter one, the person, her actions, and her office are each inseparable differentiations—the speaking of the body a movement; the movement of the body a speaking. In the West where speaking is largely reduced to *rational words* open to scientific dissection, grammatically extracted from their use and those who use it, as though words float in the heavens above, passing in and out of the human mouth, returning upon utterance to the realm of ideas for the sake of conjugation, it is increasingly difficult to *mean* anything. Meaning as use, however, refuses any division between speaker, speaking, and that which is spoken. Here is seen the easiness of separating the act from the word when the actor-speaker is likewise separable, as though there is an action or speaking apart from its entrenchment in the body. A precedence of prayer over belief or belief over prayer is only possible when consideration is denied the one in, by, and through whom prayer and belief *function*. It will be argued herein that this is largely due to the uprising of what John Walton refers to as a “substance-oriented” ontology versus the “function-oriented” ontology of the ancient world.⁸ Augustine likewise sees this in the sacrament of baptism.

Take away the word, and what is water except mere water.

Word comes to the water, and the *mysterium* is there, itself like a word to be seen. Where does water have so great a power that when it touches the body, it should wash the heart? All that from the mere word.⁹

As soon as you parse linguistically the differentiated parts of a whole, especially as it regards the human subject and her actions, words become mere words, objects mere objects, and people mere tools without a telos. Each becomes “substance-oriented” and cease to be *named* by its functional purpose. Each is something *in itself* not as it relates *to* or *for*. A person, thing, or action’s telos here is always and only itself; it does not *move* to a telos beyond itself nor is its telos *in* its movement or function but static. We will see how even the language of “transubstantiation” can be something of a misnomer, as the manifesting of Christ in bread and wine is reduced to

⁸ Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 179-199.

⁹ Augustine, *Tractatus in Joann*, 80, 3 cf 15, 4, cited in Casel, 42.

substance-accident claims, over against the incarnate action of making Eucharist. Sacramental theology hereby transgresses to objectify sign and signified over against the constituting act of making the body of Christ in, and that is, the body, both individually and socially—substance rather than a function.¹⁰ One can only speak of a “sign” and a “signified” with concern for their relatedness when the activity and its binding actors are left out of the equation.

The following is an attempt to interrogate the logic of liturgies (broadly speaking)¹¹ throughout history to show the nature of inter-human relationships *articulated* by or implicit in the movements between the human and God. This will set the backdrop for chapter five of this work that will expose how various liturgical *reforms* have likewise construed the human imaginary, with intent to problematize the embedded logic of secularism in various liturgical reforms, denying liturgy as perichoretic reciprocity. A phenomenological critique will help to expose the bounded nature of *meaning-making* that resides in the body, showing liturgy to be inherently active, co-inhering with speech. Liturgical action hereby names the conditions of possibility for human understanding, or even more boldly: liturgical action construes human knowing and *is* that which it makes known. *What* is made-manifest is the *how* of its manifesting.

I

All action is a meaning-making speaking, whereby a particular form of knowing manifests the identity of the actor and all things *in-the-between* of all parties involved in the relation. This *in-the-between* names the active relating that *is* the relation between persons, places, and things, which refuses both a chasm between and conflation of the subject and object. Two persons are hereby bound together by the movement between them, which simultaneously

¹⁰ Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 159.

¹¹ While “liturgy” throughout this work takes for granted a participatory nature in the singular Liturgy Christ is, be this a positive or negative participation, it will be important to name the various liturgies beyond “Christian worship” that condition the human imaginary and to show how a functional ontology is articulable because of the pervasive singularity of the Liturgy Christ.

differentiates and fuses each together. The “substance” here is a movement—a function. As we will see with Merleau-Ponty reminds, “I cannot understand the function of the living body except by enacting it myself, and except in so far as I am a body which rises toward the world.”¹² While Merleau-Ponty primarily addresses the individual subject here, it is important to note the emphasis on the human as a body inseparable from her function and the particular relation to the world this functioning reveals. The human is a body whose functional posturing manifests to the human what it means to be human. In other words, the human subject knows who she is in the manner of her relating to that which she is not, having the double effect of revealing who she is. Namely one who relates to the world through a particular bodily comportment.

It may be said that the body is the “hidden form of being
ourselves,” or on the other hand, that personal existence is the
taking up and manifestation of a being in a given situation.¹³

The primary emphasis here for Merleau-Ponty is that what is manifest is inseparable from its manifesting.¹⁴ The human is her action. Additionally, inherent to her action is a conscious telos intended in the act, be it known or unknown to the actor.¹⁵

Shortly following the publication of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty addressed the Société française de philosophie in an attempt to re-present the central thesis of the work.¹⁶ “I am only trying to show,” says Merleau-Ponty, “the organic tie, so to speak, between perception and intellection....”¹⁷ What Merleau-Ponty shows is that all acquisitions of knowledge involve some application of the body, a body that is never to be understood as an “add-on” to intellection; rather, “at the moment I am thinking

¹² Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2010), 87.

¹³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 192.

¹⁴ Ibid., “the thing expressed does not exist apart from the expression.”

¹⁵ Ibid. A body-conscious exists, for Merleau-Ponty, even in the absence of cognitive awareness.

¹⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. James M. Edie (Chicago: Northwestern, 1964).

¹⁷ Ibid., 20.

or considering an idea, I am not divided into the instants of my life.”¹⁸ This is to say that there is no division to be made between perception and intellection, they are differentiated parts of a whole person that are mutually contingent, what we might call interdependent consciousnesses.¹⁹ Extending the argument he makes in *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty clarifies his argument that the perceiving subject, other perceiving subjects, and the objects of perception, are part of an intersubjective world that refuses the privileging of one subjectivity over another, all the while admitting that each subject is a body—a system of all holds on the world.²⁰ Accordingly, rather than objectivity being the result of agreed upon ideals that are attached to the world (i.e. Kantian pure reason), objectivity *happens* when two persons enter the perceptive gaze of the other and come to know through their intersubjectivity, whereby neither are at the luxury of their own perception of the truth but must grapple with the habits and conditions that constitute both the truth of their perception and the perception of truth. This involves a deep awareness of knowledge as intimately bound up together with *how* knowledge is gained.

We must say... that our ideas, however limited they may be at any given moment—*since they always express our contact with being and with culture*—are capable of being true provided we keep them open to the field of nature and culture *which they must express*.²¹

This intervolvement²² with nature and culture is a porous relation, very similar to that described by Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age*.²³ All knowing is hereby contingent, which is to say that mapped onto the body is a *schema* that opposes deliberation and is moved by that which it is disciplined, most often unbeknownst to the active subject. “To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world,”²⁴ a world that both precedes and proceeds-from the body. The

¹⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception*, 20

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 17-20.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 21, *italics mine*.

²² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 168.

²³ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 25-89.

²⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 171.

particularity of the “world” here is that which has impressed itself upon the subject and calls out to the subject for her return.

Bodily experience forces us to acknowledge an imposition of meaning which is not the world of a universal constituting consciousness, a meaning which clings to certain contents. My body is that meaningful core which behaves like a general function, and which nevertheless exists, and is susceptible to disease. In it we learn to know that union of essence and existence...25

The substance, in other words, of the human subject, is her function, which construes her own knowledge of her essence as human. As Merleau-Ponty evidences, this bodily construal may very well discipline the body to perceive itself not as body but as a purely rational subject who transcends the body, i.e. secularism. Nevertheless, one only arrives here as body, and as a body who is part of a world.

For Merleau-Ponty, the world “is the totality of perceptible things and the thing of all things.”²⁶ This totality is the whole of one’s environment, navigated by one’s own “style” of engaging in the world, which moves a person to understand what they mean when they say “rational” or “real” or any other word used to articulate the “truth” of one’s world.²⁷ In other words, my articulable world is embedded in the world, which I navigate by certain habits or styles—movements by which I engage my environment and by which I am capable of thinking or understanding.

Phenomenology moves closer to a healthier and more ancient understanding of ontology as *operation*. It is movement that relates bodies together, be they humans or “things.” The manner of this movement determines the character of the relation, a mutuality of relating where everything exists *in-the-between*. The human does not exist *in-herself*; the human exists in the movement between other humans which serve to create and re-create time and space. This constituting and re-constituting of human

25 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 170.

26 Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of Perception*, 16.

27 *Ibid.*, 16-17.

relating, both regarding the relations between persons and other animate and inanimate bodies in the world—the *in-the-between*—names the indivisibility of action, actor, and acted *upon* or *with*. All movement is a relating, which is always a bodily relating.

“Worship,” in the general sense of the word, is helpful here. Worship is an ascribing of worth to that which is worshipped. Such ascription is not necessarily to a god but is broadly a movement by the subject whereby a posture is taken that implicates the subject in the “being” of the one worshipped. Think of royalty, of medieval kings and lords. The customary posture of royal subjects is to bow before the king to show his worth, to give honor, i.e. to worship. The act of worship in this regard is not a cerebral assent to a person or deity but a bodily posturing that confesses a person’s identity as bound up with the one to whom the body is offered.²⁸ In worship, the worshipper gives herself to one who is not herself, even if the external “one” is a projection of her “self,” for it remains a relocation of her identity in that which lies beyond (or seems to lie beyond) her own selfhood. To worship, then, on a very base level, is to confess one’s selfhood as identified *with* the object of adoration.

One can see this in the pledge of allegiance in the United States. Placing the hand over the heart as one confesses their national creed is no simple gesture; it is an act of worship. Identifying oneself with the flag and the “Republic for which it stands” is to align oneself, for better or worse, to the state. There is great reluctance to call this an act of worship, primarily because the majority of Americans disregard the body as the locus of meaning-making and belief, incapable of seeing how their “thinking” is entrenched in a body disciplined by civil religion. This, however, is nothing new, and may not be overtly negative either, depending on the state of the Republic at any point in time. The point to be made here is that the body is the home of the human’s allegiance, the locus of one’s identity.

This treatment of the Pledge of Allegiance is helpful in exposing how the flag is treated as a “symbol” in the secular age. The flag is a “symbol” in

²⁸ This is most clear in medieval marriage rites, whereby the husband to his wife to be says, “With my body I thee worship.” This sense of worship entails more closely a sense of belonging and allegiance.

the most modern sense of the word, something that communicates an idea, simply a visual aid so that you have something to which to pledge your allegiance.²⁹ Yet this is not how the flag works upon the body-mind. Though the statesman articulate his pledge and flag as inconsequential and merely symbolic of his love for God and country, rather than bound up together with it, one need only burn this flag to see how his secular ideal breaks down. Though a person rationalize the flag their bodies refuse such a reduction. That is, the flag-conditioned body refuses the mind abstraction. The comportment of the body is the condition for the mind's rationale.

To speak of Christ as Liturgy and the church as the locus of this Liturgy—the enacted body-Christ, makes for the natural transposition of "liturgy" to the church's ritual participation in *Liturgy*. Christian liturgy is a participatory, bodily posturing of the ekklesia in the Liturgy-Christ—a mimesis. Christian worship—liturgy, then, is to be understood with the early church as the human's entering into the *way of knowing* that God makes-manifest through the church. A bodily comportment that re-presents (and this is not representation) human nature and the nature of the church as itself a body, the body of Christ. Human identity is revealed in liturgy. The human is told who she is in her baptism and is continually made to re-member who she is—one of the baptized, or faithful—in the Eucharist. The Eucharist, the sacrament that makes all sacraments intelligible as it is God made-manifest—Christ, and the human's proximity to the Eucharist makes known to the human who she is. The human subject is identified by her object of worship—God, specifically known in her active participation in the movements of liturgy. Liturgy comports the human to bodily perceive all things in its christic relation.³⁰

This liturgical identification of subject identified by object exudes from the pages of scripture. Abram, the subject, receives his new name Abraham and is reckoned as righteous by God, the object, who makes him to be the father of many nations. Saul is made Paul and becomes the missionary

²⁹ Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973), 125.

³⁰ Maximus, "Ad Thalassium 60," in Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken, trans., *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003).

to the Gentles. Simon, now Peter, receives his identity as the church's first bishop, despite his whimsical nature. Consider even the gospel narratives of Jesus, the Son of Man (subject), is known in his being identified by God the Son (object), wherein the divine and human natures are united in an unconfused way such that the two natures mutually identify one another.³¹ Hereby does the Triune God insist on knowing and being-known in eternal exchange of love with humanity. The second hypostasis is this mutual identification who identifies divine ousia with humanity.

Subject-Object identification is made even more explicit in the Old Testament accounts of worship as well. *Sukkot* is the Jewish festival that marks the deliverance of the Israelites from the hands of Pharaoh by God. Prior to the Temple's destruction in 70 AD, it is celebrated with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The pilgrimage entails a gathering of first fruits of the harvest to be an offering of thanks for God's liberating the Israelites from the hands of Pharaoh. The pilgrimage and taking temporary residence in booths, still practiced by many Jews today, is a commemoration of the Israelites time in the desert following the Exodus from Egypt. The wilderness wandering—life in the desert—is a restorative purging for the ancient Hebrews, which, judging by the making of a golden calf while Moses is atop the mountain, needed to take place. The Hebrews had been too long in Pharaoh's land that they had not only forgotten their liturgical identity but had also had begun to order their lives by the disciplines of Pharaoh—the false liturgy of the world. The Law given to Moses hereby serves not as God's giving of ethical principles or a codified morality, as is commonly misunderstood; it is the giving of a new order. The Commandments serve as the new economy for God's Chosen—the governance of the household of Israel.

The Law becomes the identifier for the Israelite, thenceforth to be known as a people of *Torah*. God gives the Law; the Israelites become a people of the Law, which describes the economic order for those who reside in the house of Israel and how Israel is to relate to those outside. One could argue that the books of Torah are the first economic text books. They declare

³¹ The union in Christ as mutual permeation is following the language John of Damascus.

God's sovereign administration (οικονομῆ) over the earth and identify Israel as a people of the Sovereign.

Feudalism in the Middle Ages is exemplary of this holistic identification. The peasants, lords, vassals, all, in a real sense, worshipped the king. He is not a deity, but it is he who informs their identity as a people of reciprocity in common-union with the crown—his kingship informs their participation in the kingdom.³² In this way was the king inseparable from the peasants. The peasants worked the land of the king, who had given them the land. The peasants supplied crops for the king and his court, which was their reasonable offering to the king for his protection and sharing of the land. The king gives the land; the people give back to the king the fruits of the land in thanksgiving, both continuing in ceaseless reciprocity.³³ The land is the king's, which means that the peasants have nothing of their own to give. Their living within the bounds of the kingdom is a complete dispossession of anything they might call their own. Yet the dispossession is mutual. The king, in gathering the fruits of the land, obliges himself to sustaining and protecting the lives of the peasants as a landed people.

It is easy for the modern reader to impose a logic of slavery here, but what must be acknowledge is that it is an imposition. While there have been disasters for kings and queens throughout history, the monarch still found his or her crown to be derived from the people. Just as a person's identity is given her by the crown in whose land she resides, likewise is the monarch's identity given by the people in the land, closely related to the nature of a bishop as seen previously with Ignatius and Cyprian. Unlike a modern democracy where all are sovereign, which makes freedom at best improbable, with monarch and kingdom reciprocity is requisite. Mutual identification—a

³² See Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), especially 42-66, 219-331; Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), especially 87-93; and Marc Bloch, *Land and Work in Mediaeval Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

³³ Mervyn James describes this reciprocal relation through the feast of Corpus Christi, whereby the celebration of Christ's mystical body modeled for the medieval community what it meant to be a social body. "It suggested in the first place the intimacy and naturalness of the social bond, since it was presented as a kind of extension of the psychosomatic self." Mervyn James, *Society, Politics, and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 20.

shared identity—is possible only where the active lordship of Christ is paradigmatic, the non-compulsory compulsion of the cross.

Worship as identity is made explicit in the initiatory rites of the early church—the catechumenate. This process of incorporation into the church often took place over the course of several years, especially if the catechumen fell into some grievous sin along the way, extending her period of preparation.³⁴ It is impossible to locate an official norm in each locale as to how the catechumen entered into the realm of the faithful. Three years could be said to be typical, but even this is disputable. Historically, however, there are three stages for the catechumen: seeker, hearer, kneeler.³⁵ The initial stage as seeker is as it sounds, one seeking the faith of the church. It involves a genuine period of discernment by the seeker, but also for the church and whether it is willing to grant the seeker access to the liturgy of the catechumens. Once the seeker is admitted into liturgy the church obliges itself to the seeker's becoming one of the faithful—the baptized. The second stage as hearer, which is better understood as the beginning for the catechumen, is for those who are present during for the liturgy of the catechumen, now Liturgy of the Word, and were able to remain during the reading of the scripture and preaching of the sermon. The hearers were escorted out of the church at *The Peace* before the beginning of the Communion Rite. The kneelers were those who were permitted to remain in the church during the Eucharistic rite, to kneel and pray with the baptized—the faithful, but could not receive Eucharist, though they were to receive a blessing from the bishop/priest.³⁶ The early church catechumenate varied slightly from place to place; however, the essence of this preparation for baptism rests in its intentional incorporation of persons into the body of Christ.

The formative process for the catechumen was designed to make way for her active-learning of the holy mysteries. There is a didactic element that goes along with the catechumenate, but the true learning is visceral and occurs

³⁴ Charles Joseph Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church: From the Original Documents, to the Close of the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325* (New York: AMS Press, 1894), 155.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 421.

when the catechumen has through baptism become one of the faithful, which is at once a final stage of the catechumenate and the beginning of the life of the baptized. As found in Ambrose, knowledge of the mysteries (sacraments) is possible only after one has passed through the mysteries. Teaching on the mysteries does not occur prior to the catechumen's participation in the liturgical rites. Ambrose understands his teaching on the mystery to be receptive only because of the what the liturgical habituation in the mysteries have now opened the catechumen to comprehend.

Now time warns us to speak of the mysteries and to set forth the very purpose of the sacraments. If we had thought that this should have been taught those not yet initiated before baptism, we would be considered to have betrayed rather than to have portrayed the mysteries... So open your ears and enjoy the good odor of eternal life which has been breathed upon you by the grace of the sacraments.³⁷

Participation in the mysteries, says Ambrose, makes knowledge of the mysteries possible. It is the responsorial nature of theology here that leads Schmemmann and others to label theology as a descriptive endeavor, with just cause, as it is a particular way of remembering through articulation the grace at work in the world.³⁸ The whole of the catechumenate, from its invitation and participation to its theological articulation, refuses to treat the wisdom or faith as objectified (abstract) knowledge. There is, accordingly, no objective knowledge, whereby a cognitive subject can understand without participating in that which is known—without being assimilated to that which knows and makes-known. There is only a mutual participation in knowledge, whereby the engagement between knower and known is a reciprocal relation. Water, bread, and wine are not inconsequential to communion with and knowledge of

³⁷ Ambrose, "De Mysteriis," in *Theological and Dogmatic Works*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, vol. 44, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington: Catholic University of American Press, 1963), i.2-3.

³⁸ It is important to maintain, however, the full force of theology *as* liturgy and liturgy *as* theology, to avoid the pitfall of dividing what can only be distinguished for the sake of further understanding the fullness of what it means for Christ to be Liturgy. Distinct not separate; therefore, one cannot simply say that theology "describes" liturgy unless one also says that liturgy "describes" theology. Even here is the force of *each* lacking. Liturgy as participation in the Liturgy-Christ refuses any kind of removal from the eternal *act-being* relation of God.

God and others. Bathing, eating, and drinking, habituate the body—posture the body—to enter into the realm to which one is aiming. It is here that the mind goes with the body and not vice versa.³⁹ The mind can only go *with* the body. Plainly, form is content and there is no content without form. The body is the form of meaning, and while one can intellectually assent to alter its form it can only do so as body. The liturgical body, then—the church, *means* not by doctrinal or canonical articulation, for these are "principles" that recall *meaning*, but its movements; the movement of the ecclesial body is its meaning. Meaning is in the making, and any "truth" revealed is only revealed in the act or re-membered in act.

How this formative knowing works itself out in the early church is of crucial importance. The move from contemplation to *theologia* or rest—rest being a state of equilibrium not a cease in movement, for this would nullify the Creator-creature distinction—is the ultimate goal of the human.⁴⁰ Contemplation is not a flight from the body; it is, rather, a bodily conditioning that orders human desire to attend bodily to him who transcends the body through body—Christ.

Next we will explore how Maximus Confessor divulges this bodily comportment, showing how it is only in the body that the human can realize her true nature as body-soul. For Maximus, it is the formation of desire that opens the human to knowledge. All things are hereby knowable only through virtuous habituation, which constitute human perceiving first as movement and then as contemplation, yet neither as separable one from the other.⁴¹

³⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 189.

⁴⁰ Maximus, *Mystagogy*, V.

⁴¹ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7.

II

With Maximus, the mind subsists in human action.⁴² Action forms character, which manifests to each person a particular *way of perceiving*⁴³ who they are, which informs desire/will giving way to a particular understanding of "who I am." It is here that movement is fundamental to human nature, whereby rest is not a cessation action but co-operation of movement according to one's natural will—human nature, which is life in God, communion with God, i.e. freedom.

We find in Maximus a corrective of the Origenist paradigm for attaining this freedom, this rest. Origen sets out three stages as to how this knowing occurs: *ethike, physike, and enoptike*. It is this that Maximus seeks to salvage in his own adaptation; a formulation adhered to faithfully in the early monasteries. For Maximus, the three stages of virtue, knowledge, and theology⁴⁴ name an *entering into* Knowledge, wherein Knower and known become one in the act of knowing.⁴⁵

The Word of God is a door, because he leads on to knowledge those who have rightly accomplished the way of the virtues in a blameless course of asceticism, and show them, as a light, the brilliant treasures of wisdom. For he is alike way and door and key and kingdom; a way as guide; a key as the one who opens and who is opened for those who are worthy of divine treasures; a door as the one who gives entry; a kingdom as the one who is inherited and who comes to be present in all through participation.⁴⁶

⁴² Maximus, "Ad Thalassium 17," in Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken, trans., *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003).

⁴³ It is important here to understand perception not as an ideological "reframing," but as everything bound up together in the conditioning of a way of *intending the world*, the social and bodily comportment within which habits are impressed or enacted that gives rise to a bodily perceiving with an embedded intellect and telos. See also *Ambiguum* 60.

⁴⁴ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, II.16.

⁴⁵ This is not to say that the human is subsumed into God, but that there is a fusion that occurs which all the while sustains particularity, just as difference and unity are mutually sustaining within the Trinity. This is not a Buddhist Nirvana where the self is erased; rather, it is an absolute Creator-creation distinction without division.

⁴⁶ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, II.69.

Virtuous activity and a right ordering of the material world *dispose* the human to knowledge. This activity is not so much the efficient cause of human knowing; rather, it is the formal cause. Because this knowing is a participatory knowing, knowledge is always *there*, as it were, waiting to be discovered.⁴⁷ The human is predisposed by grace to knowledge, yet knowledge is—especially knowledge of God or oneself in God—“unnecessary.” That is, knowledge of God is not compulsory. The bodily comportment through active participation in knowing opens the human to know herself not as an object of the love of God, but *as* God, drawn into divine erotic-knowing. The discipline and obedience exercised ‘*in us by the Word*’—grace—illuminates the human to know all things only in accordance with who God in Christ is.⁴⁸ One hereby becomes God through participation, unclouded by the material, knowing the material only by divine illumination.⁴⁹

Whoever by his choices cultivates the good natural seed shows the end to be the same as the beginning and the beginning to be the same as the end. Indeed the beginning and the end are one. As a result, he is in genuine harmony with God, since the goal of everything is given in its beginning and the end of everything is given in its ultimate goal. As to the beginning, in addition to receiving being itself, one receives the natural good by participation: as to the end, one zealously traverses one’s

⁴⁷ It is here that the Socratic midwifery is important. See Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Greece and Rome*, vol. I (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1946), 107. All that is knowable does, in a natural sense, already exist within the human as *imago Dei* waiting to be discovered. It is not, however, merely a substantial essence that can be located through the dialectic. It necessitates bodily habituation for this nature to become manifest, which runs parallel with the dialectic, for the end of understanding is right action. Thinking about human self-understanding liturgically, nature within the human rises out of her operative participation in the liturgical economy. What is absolutely necessary to remember here is that the image within is perceived through the particularity of one’s bodily habituation—perceived through the act. More explicitly, one does not come upon the *imago Dei* within accidentally. It is manifest through bodily function. However the bodily functions—however the body is conditioned and habituated to move about in the world—will determine for the subject how she is moved to understand herself as human. Without liturgically ordered desires the human will mistake the image within for a self-contingent image, devoid of its ontological identity as assimilated to the Son and within the erotic reciprocity of the Trinity.

⁴⁸ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, II.84.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, II.84-90. For Maximus, moving beyond Origen, the fullness of this process ends in *complete* knowledge of the Good, seeing everything with clarity and entering into a changeless state. Full illumination is eschatological, rendering knowledge in the temporal realm incomplete, though proportionate to a person’s progress in virtue. Knowledge, then, is always eschatological; the human always groans for more and is eternally being completed.

course toward the beginning and source without deviation by means of one's good will and choice. And through this course one becomes God, being made God by God. To the inherent goodness of the image is added the likeness acquired by the practice of virtue and the exercise of the will.⁵⁰

Maximus is expounding here on human identity as an acquisition of knowledge, as a coming "to know as we are known."⁵¹ And it is the voluntary movement of humans, "either in accord with the will and word of God or against the will and word of God," that prepares or hinders each person to hear the divine voice and know.⁵²

So long as I am imperfect and insubordinate in not obeying God through the keeping of the commandments, and have not reached the interior perfection of knowledge, the Christ also must be considered imperfect and insubordinate as related to me and in me. In this case I diminish him and cut him down and fail to grow up with him spiritually, since we are Christ's body, each one a member of it. "The sun rises and the sun goes down," says Scripture. Thus it is also with the Word who is sometimes regarded as up and sometimes as down obviously depending on the dignity and nature and character of those who practice virtue and who are moved toward divine knowledge.⁵³

It is by the practice of the virtues that the human gains familiarity with God,⁵⁴ for it is only when the body has been rightly disposed that the truth of human identity as divine is made knowable. Being rightly formed in character does not causally effect true knowledge in the human. Character formation opens the human to knowledge of the truth, but is not determinative. With Maximus, it is a virtuous or non-virtuous habitude and way of life that enables or compromises the human's ability to know the truth of her human nature.

⁵⁰ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 2; see also Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 9.1, 810-811.

⁵¹ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 2; 1 Corinthians 13:12.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 7.3. For Maximus, because all action is a participation in the life of God, the human is drawn to God even if she runs from God.

⁵³ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, II.30-31.

⁵⁴ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 4.

Volitive participation in being rightly formed and thereby choosing the good is essential.

The economic ordering that disposes the human to faith for understanding, the fashioning of humans into the likeness of the particular image in which humankind is created—the *imago Dei*, is liturgy. Liturgy is the form of the church. Likeness to the image is borne through willed, active participation in the making of Eucharist through a person's liturgy-role, be they bishop, priest, deacon, or layperson. Through participation in liturgy the human becomes the action she enacts. She enters into the eternal union of Thought, Word, and Deed. The image that she is by nature is made known to her through her willed participation, liturgically, in the body of Christ. Following Irenaeus, Maximus makes an image-likeness distinction. As created, the human is endowed with the image of her Creator—the good, natural seed.⁵⁵ To be like God, however, exacts a particular mode (*tropos*) of existence made possible only through willed participation. Knowledge of the truth is hereby inseparable from one's participation in truth⁵⁶—character and cognition co-inhere with one another.⁵⁷ The essential nature of humanity is made present to the human through her *unnecessary* participation in grace, which is a becoming in likeness what she is by nature.

Irenaeus speaks of this participation in terms of a Eucharistic knowing in his arguments against the immaterial Gnostics: “Our manner of thinking is conformed to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist confirms our manner of thinking.”⁵⁸ Conformity to the Eucharist cannot be couched in modern terms. The Eucharist and the liturgical rite are inseparable for Irenaeus and the early church with him.⁵⁹ To speak of the Eucharist is to speak of the whole economy the Eucharist *is*, for, as discussed above, the administrator and the

⁵⁵ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 2.

⁵⁶ Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 333.

⁵⁷ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 97c-96ba.

⁵⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.xviii.5.

⁵⁹ See also Otto Georg Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), especially chapter 5: “Recent theology is inclined to locate the enactment of Christ's death and resurrection in but one part of the Eucharistic rite, i.e., the consecration of bread and wine upon the altar. But the ancient liturgies fail to support this interpretation (92).

economy administrated are one in the same—priest and victim are inseparable,⁶⁰ which is to say, to borrow that great and oft repeated line from Henri De Lubac, “the Eucharist makes the church,” because *in the making* of Eucharist is the life of him in whom all persons live and move and have their being. In many ways, we can see in this the problematic of any sort of “substance-accident” division. It is not the tangible/intangible elements/essence involved in Eucharist; rather, it is the functional nature of the sacrament that relieves any division between the action, the giver, and the recipients involved. The sacrament is not static or substance-oriented, but functional—the creative act of God to be participated in by the human. That is, the Eucharist is an incarnate movement from God to God, whereby the human is assimilated to the Son and returned to its creator by the Spirit. This is the force behind Maximus’ understanding of volition. It is an alignment of desire or will, which does not imply one’s ability to “choose” and act; rather, it is the natural participation in the principle of one’s being hidden in Christ, such that participation is freely willing the will of God and freely doing what God has already done. It is volitive participation in becoming who the human eschatologically *is*, eternally recapitulated in Christ.

The sacramental assimilation of God to creation and creation to God hereby moves beyond what might be called a “substance-oriented” ontology to a “function-oriented” ontology.⁶¹ The locus of human nature hereby “resides” in movement, a movement that is absolutely participatory. God in Christ moves toward and into creation, recapitulating human nature in himself, gathering the human into triune reciprocity. The early Christian martyr stands as paradigmatic for how the human is gathered into the perichoresis. As shown in the martyrology of Felicitas, who was with child when she was taken captive in 203 AD, during the reign of the Emperor Severus, it is the singularity of Christ’s suffering that precedes and incorporates all Christian suffering. Felicitas was eight months pregnant when she was imprisoned for being a catechumen. At the time, due to the obvious anxiety of being pregnant and facing a public death in the coliseum among the beasts, Felicitas was in

⁶⁰ Hebrews 10.

⁶¹ Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 179-199.

much pain. She was asked, given her struggle with birth pangs and being in prison, how she would be able to handle the torments of the wild beasts. Felicitas responded, saying: “I myself now suffer that which I suffer, but then another shall be in me who shall suffer for me, because I am to suffer for him.”

In the days of the early church it was Christ’s singularity as suffering servant, high priest, liturgist, martyr, and so on that makes all suffering, all liturgical action, all martyrdoms, and the priestly office itself intelligible. *All is participation*. It is this that Eusebius describes in his church history.

To such an extent were they emulators and imitators of Christ, “who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” that, although they had attained such glory and not once or twice but many times had given testimony, and had been taken back from the beasts with burns and scars and wounds all over them, they neither proclaimed themselves as martyrs nor did they permit us to address them with the name, but if ever anyone of us by letter or by word addressed them as martyrs, they rebuked sharply. For they gladly conceded the name of martyrdom to Christ, the faithful and true witness and first-begotten of the dead and author of the life of God, and they recalled the martyrs who already passed on and said: “They are already witnesses, whom Christ has deemed worthy to be taken up at their confession, having sealed their martyrdom by their departure, but we are lowly and humble confessors,” and with tears they besought the brethren, begging that earnest prayers be offered that they might be made perfect.⁶²

As Eusebius recounts, there is for the early church but One Martyr—Christ. All suffering is a bearing of Christ’s own suffering—a participation in his unequivocal martyrdom. One might think that this evacuates meaning from human suffering or makes such suffering inconsequential; however, the Son’s

⁶² Eusebius Pamphili, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, vol. I (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), V.ii.

becoming man is the singular event that makes all human encounters, be they joy or suffering, intelligible and meaningful. Were this not true, the Gnostic would have a case. Without the death and resurrection of the Christ, human suffering is inconsequential, which is Paul's point in his first letter to the Corinthians;⁶³ human suffering *in itself* has no meaning except as one of many occurrences in the vicious cycle of violence. For the martyr's suffering and death to have meaning, it must participate in the martyrdom of the Christ; it must be Christ who suffers in her, for her. For the circumstances of human life to be intelligible at all it must be known only in the particular and peculiar relation of the Divine and Human natures in Christ.

The early Christian martyr, through bearing the passion of Christ in her body, becomes known as a vessel, if not *the* vessel, of the holy. The transcendent God who is come in Jesus of Nazareth makes his home in the very bones of the saint as the body of the martyr becomes the dwelling place of the Lord. Her body is the witness of the unseen eternal reality. Spiritualism in the early church is anything but abstract. As fully embodying the passion and death of Christ, the martyr bridges the gap between past and future, in the present material state of her body. We are reminded in all of this of Paul's own account of his march towards martyrdom, "For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Paul is not setting forth a new platitude to meditate upon, but is, rather, giving words to his active participation in the *via crucis*, made possible by the indwelling Christ. It is only through participation in the way of the cross that one can know the truth of their being and what it means to bear witness to this reality. To know the Lord of heaven is to know him through his sufferings, by becoming like him in his death (Philippians 3:10). Yet the term martyr, as Eusebius reminds us, is reserved for Christ himself. By reserving this term solely for Christ, the early saints deny martyrdom as a category of Christian action, confessing that the life, death and resurrection of the Christ are not mere historical events in time, as though linear reality makes God intelligible; rather, they are inseparable from the person, in whom the whole of past and future come together in the fullness of time as God's self-declaration. God's entering into

⁶³ 1 Corinthians 15.14.

creation is simultaneously a gathering of creation into himself, and while the essence of God lies beyond human cognition, the actions of God in Christ make known the truth of human nature.

Ignatius may be the best example of the early martyr's understanding of cruciform participation. As aforesaid, Ignatius presses the Christian to understand all suffering only within the context of the suffering Christ himself. In his letter to the Romans, Ignatius states that the death of Christ is "the suffering of my God,"⁶⁴ and it is the reality of the Lord's sufferings—the reality of God crucified on the cross—wherein human suffering participates in the ontological reality God is. "To be near the sword is to be near God; to be in the claws of wild beasts is to be in the hands of God."⁶⁵ Ignatius' participation in the singular martyrdom of Christ, then, likewise manifests the grace that rests upon the churches. As Christ is the offering to the Father for the life of the world, being the singular capable offerer, likewise does God make-manifest and mediate grace through Ignatius, who, by his analogous participation in the self-emptying of God in Christ, becomes *a* cross of redemption—a type of the Archetype. Ignatius becomes what he mediates—Christ. It is his participation in the Liturgy-Christ—the saint's body as anamnesis (re-membering). As the Virgin serves to be the gate of heaven, through which the Second Person of the Holy Trinity enters into human history, likewise is martyrdom a gate, through which the human enters into the future of God's eternal present—paradise. It is for this reason that martyrdom is understood to be a baptizing of the human. Ignatius knows that the wild beasts are the waters by which the Spirit will devour him. Baptized by the beast, the martyr becomes Eucharist, (re)membered—assimilated—to the One in whom she has been recapitulated. Martyrdom is hereby a binding together of the bodily order and spiritual order, the two orders that are united in the Christ of God, for the life of the world. By taking into her body the sufferings of Christ, the martyr, through the Spirit, is taken into the offering of the Son to the Father. It is for this reason that these saints of the church serve as the paradigm for Christian living. The actual death of the Christian because of her

⁶⁴ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Romans*, VI.

⁶⁵ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrneans*, IV.

witness is not necessary, even if highly probable during the earliest days of the church. But it is clear for Paul, as with Ignatius who followed after, that knowledge comes by way of participation, not primarily by way of study. Knowledge comes by being disposed to receive knowledge.⁶⁶ To know is to be re-constituted by the Liturgy-Christ, so to become *liturgy*.

Ignatius' Christology, however, is already becoming more and more refined by Paul in the middle of the first century. His letter to the Colossians is a primary example of what is articulated in the martyrology of Felicitas and others, as well as Ignatius' own description.

It is now my joy to suffer for you; for the sake of Christ's body, the church, I am completing what still remains *for Christ to suffer in my own person....* Let every word and action, everything you do, be in the name of the Lord Jesus, and give thanks *through him* to God the Father.⁶⁷

Paul clearly expresses the agency of Christ operative in the Christian. Paul's suffering is not his own; rather, it is Christ who suffers in him and it is Christ who alone bears the church's thanksgiving to the Father.

Returning now to Maximus, we find that knowledge subsists in action—the mind subsists in habit.⁶⁸ It is human action that determines one's perceptive capacity, and inasmuch as these actions run analogous to Christ's they manifest the truth of human nature, which is matched with illumination by God according to the ability of the recipient.⁶⁹ Such active knowing is a knowledge through experience, specifically regarding how these actions shape the human will.⁷⁰ Activity produces, not knowledge itself, but the framework of understanding—conditions of possibility, such that all things are knowable to a person through her participation in particular habits and practices. Take

⁶⁶ 1 Corinthians 13.12.

⁶⁷ Colossians 1.24, 3.17, *italics mine*. While the authorship of Colossians is disputable, its dating in the middle of the first century is attested and shows quite clearly, whether Paul or a follower is its author, that the participatory nature of the Christian in the life of Christ is a life enacted *in* not *by* the individual.

⁶⁸ Maximus, *Ad Thalassium* 17.

⁶⁹ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7; see also Maximus, "Commentary on the Our Father," in Berthold Maximus Confessor: *Selected Writings*; see also Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, trans. John Ferguson (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), I.1.

⁷⁰ Maximus, *Ad Thalassium* 6.

for instance the person who tastes wine for the first time. Regardless the quality of the wine it will be difficult to enjoy. The palate must form a habit of drinking wine to find it enjoyable. Likewise, she who has only experienced drinking fine wines will struggle to enjoy a wine that has not been properly aged or crafted. Drinking wine is a coming to know through experience. The well-trained palate will be able to enjoy a wide-variety, and will come to know for herself the wine that is of greatest aroma and depth, which will be preferred and held as the standard for all others. It is this that Maximus is setting forth with regard to the sun. Once you've seen the sun and know it to be the sun, you will never mistake it for a mere star or moon. The Good and the Beautiful cannot be mistaken. Those who mistake evil and sin as the good and beautiful are those whose wills are not aligned with the divine will and *unwillingly* will, rather than *willingly* will. The will bent toward sin is an *unwilling* will—a will enslaved to the passions of the flesh, still *attached*⁷¹ to what is pleasurable. The will that has been *detached* from the false pleasures of the flesh is the willing will, a will disciplined by the sacramental life of the body, holding the Good ever before the human through active participation.

The activities of a person form their particular character. The human knows, then, who she is in relation to her active-character.⁷² To be the “image of” is to stand in a particular relation.⁷³ Human actions hereby make manifest personhood. Through activity, then, the human is either enslaved to or freed from attachments acquired by misaligned passions and knows to be true that which is consistent with her freedom for or slavery to desire. It is a construal of the imaginary, giving way to a particular form of relating to God, oneself, and all others. Beyond this, however, virtuous action disposes the human to the “the full power of knowing the divine nature insofar as this is possible.”⁷⁴ Knowledge is hereby the kenotic life of God coming into being in the human. By virtuous habituation is Christ mysteriously born in the human, “becoming

⁷¹ It is important to remember that Maximus' articulation of “attachment” and “detachment” is not a flight from the bodily perceiving but an ordering of bodily perception that gives way to contemplation—a contemplation that finds its field of vision in virtuous habituation. There is no contemplation or perceiving apart from the body. It is never abstract.

⁷² Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 178-179.

⁷³ Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy*, 78.

⁷⁴ Maximus, *Commentary on the Our Father*.

incarnate...” causing “the soul which begets him to be a virgin-mother.”⁷⁵
The human’s participation in the ascetic struggle is an entering into this
kenotic knowing.⁷⁶

Found here in Maximus is a clear assertion of the platonic principle
that virtue is knowledge.⁷⁷ “By practicing the virtues the body gains
familiarity with God and becomes a fellow servant with the soul.”⁷⁸ It is in
the soul that God dwells,⁷⁹ and, following Aristotle, it is the soul that animates
the body,⁸⁰ virtuous activity removes the fictional divide between body and
soul that sinful action, not a sinful nature, reifies. Crucial to Maximus’
understanding of human activity is the inherent goodness of human nature.⁸¹

To the inherent goodness of the image is added the likeness
acquired by the practice of virtue and exercise of the will. The
inclination to ascend to see one’s proper beginning was
implanted in man by nature.⁸²

As seen earlier with Irenaeus and Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus presses the
image-likeness distinction of human nature. Human nature is naturally good,
naturally endowed with the “*logos* of wisdom.”⁸³ Indeed, says Maximus, the
human is a “portion of God.”⁸⁴ This *logos* or image is the secret disposition of
the soul that lay hidden without the forging through virtuous activity a
“tenacious habit of contemplation.”⁸⁵ Likeness, then, is the virtuous ordering
of human perception.⁸⁶ Likeness equals virtue; image equals a kind of divine
endowment, sustained by absolute generosity. The human moves from grace

⁷⁵ Maximus, *Commentary on the Our Father*.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷⁷ Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.

⁷⁸ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 1092B.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Maximus, *The Four Hundred Chapters on Love*, III.31, in Berthold.

⁸¹ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 1084A.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Maximus, *Letter 2*, 408B, in Louth.

⁸⁴ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 1081C.

⁸⁵ Maximus, *Chapters on Love*, III.69; see also *Letter 2*, 408.

⁸⁶ Again, perception here is not an abstract “thinking” of the world but a particular bodily comportment that conditions the field of knowledge of the human. Perceiving is imbedded in the movements of each person that limit or extend the range of human knowing.

to virtue, from virtue to knowledge, from knowledge to contemplation, and from contemplation back to the grace operative in her at the outset. Reason and the ascetic struggle are hereby inextricably linked, which provide the “background” for contemplation.⁸⁷ The Word is operative in the soul. Nevertheless, divine action refuses coercion. Volitive participation is essential for Maximus, whereby likeness to one’s image is attained.

This likeness acquired through embodied virtue, therefore, is in no way coercive nor is it accidental, “for the word of God and God wills always and in all things to accomplish the mystery of his embodiment.”⁸⁸ Humans are created for incarnation. The incarnation of the Son is a *natural* event of God’s eternal creative action, which the human receives—becomes—by participation.⁸⁹

When we learn the essential nature of living things, in what respect, how, and out of what they exist, we will not be driven by desire to know more. For if we know God our knowledge of each and everything will be brought to perfection, and, insofar as humanly possible, the infinite, divine and ineffable dwelling place will be ours to enjoy. For this is what our sainted teacher said in his philosophical aphorism: ‘For we shall know as we are known,’ when we mingle our god-formed mind and divine reason to what is properly its own and the image returns to the archetype for which it now longs.⁹⁰

This mingling of the god-formed mind and divine reason *depends* on the human’s volitive nature. Created in the image of God the human is predisposed to virtue—the Good, as a logos of the Logos. Yet this natural being has unnaturally fallen.⁹¹ Sinful nature for Maximus is inbred, not innate.⁹² There is no room for human depravity in Maximus’ anthropology.⁹³

⁸⁷ Maximus, *Difficulty 10*, 1108A.

⁸⁸ Maximus, *Ambiguum 7*, 1084D.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 7, 1084A.

⁹⁰ Maximus, *Ambiguum 7*, 1077A-B.

⁹¹ Maximus, *Ambiguum 42*, 1321B.

⁹² Maximus, *Ambiguum 8*, 1104D.

⁹³ Maximus, *Chapters on Love*, IV.14: “Evil is not to be regarded as in the substance of creatures but in its mistaken and irrational movement.”

The human is separated from herself by her actions, not by nature, which has divided body (likeness) and soul (image) that God's becoming Man has restored, recapitulating all things in the eternal Logos.⁹⁴ Body and soul are inseparable; image exacts likeness.⁹⁵ The two are distinguishable only in thought but never in reality.

The importance of the virtues is that it is only "by practicing the virtues [that] the body gains familiarity with God and becomes a fellow servant with the soul."⁹⁶ Additionally, without this bodily comportment, the disciplining of human sensibilities to the Good, contemplation cannot be attained. True knowledge is only "acquired through exertion."⁹⁷ Exertion here names the movement toward deification, the entering into the being-known of God. Knowledge for the human is always a manifest knowing. Only God *knows*.⁹⁸ The only knowledge available to the human is a knowledge of participation, and this occurs either positively or negatively.

Voluntary movement, either in accord with the will and word of God, or against the will and word of God, prepares each person to hear the divine voice.⁹⁹

This hearing, however, is a mingling of the divine voice imbedded in the soul. It is entering into God's self-knowing, the mingling of the divine voice internal and external to the soul.

God becomes to the soul (and through the soul to the body) what the soul is to the body, as God alone knows, so that the soul receives changelessness and the body immortality; hence the whole man, as the object of divine action, is divinized by being made God by the grace of God who became man. He remains wholly man in soul and body by nature, and becomes

⁹⁴ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 1080B.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1100C.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1092B.

⁹⁷ Maximus, *Ad Thalassium* 6, 70.

⁹⁸ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 60.

⁹⁹ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 1085C.

wholly God in body and soul by grace and by the unparalleled divine radiance of blessed glory appropriate to him.¹⁰⁰

The divine nature of humanity, then, is manifest to the extent that the soul moves the body—to the extent that the body and soul are a single movement, for the soul is to the body as God is to the soul, the end of which is divinization. The goal for Maximus is that the body would be so disciplined by virtue that deliberation would be absent from the soul. It is a movement beyond “reason and ideas,” in terms of an intellectual deliberation where thought precedes action.

There is but one true and authentic knowledge for Maximus, which is gained only by a particular perceiving of the known object. Such knowledge is an engagement with the object, akin to a cohabitation with that which is known. Maximus describes something like a phenomenology of perception akin to that of Merleau-Ponty. For Merleau-Ponty, perceiving an object is to inhabit it, to plunge oneself into it.¹⁰¹ It is a “seeing” that is conditioned by one’s bodily habituation out of which one is assimilated to the object. In his criticism of intellectualism, Merleau-Ponty states that its failure lies in a removal of the intellect from the “stuff” in which knowledge is realized, i.e. the body and the totality of its background, environment, etc.¹⁰² For Merleau-Ponty, there is no thought that exists independent of the movements and circumstances whereby and wherein the subject makes her way in the world. Thinking is non-existent before and without the subject’s habituation and inhabiting of her particular environment. What is known is known through the body-mind’s engagement with the world, whose actions manifest to the subject what it means for her to be (human). Maximus offers a strikingly similar critique in *Ad Thalassium 60*.

¹⁰⁰ Maximus, *Ambiguum 7*, 1085C. Irenaeus’ influence is also seen here. “Faith and love are not taught. But knowledge, conveyed from communication through the grace of God as a deposit, is entrusted to those who show themselves worthy of it and from it the worth of love beams forth from light to light (*The Stromata*, V.vii.x, ANF). Further, Irenaeus remarks that, “the Lord taught us that no man is capable of knowing God, unless he be taught of God; that is, that God cannot be known without God: but that this is the express will of the Father, that God should be known. For they shall know Him to whomsoever the Son has revealed Him” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.vi.4., ANF).

¹⁰¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 78-79.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 143.

...there is that truly authentic knowledge, gained only by actual experience, apart from reason and ideas, which provides a total perception of the known object through a participation by grace... this active, experiential knowledge which, by participation, furnishes the direct perception of the object known, can supplant the relative knowledge based on reason and ideas.¹⁰³

For Maximus, it is proximity to the known whereby that which knows and is known co-inhere though remain unconfused. Such proximate knowledge supplants relative knowledge because it is a knowing that refuses a body-soul division, just as is seen with Merleau-Ponty's rejection of a body-mind separation.

Merleau-Ponty's and Maximus' projects are obviously not the same and do not address equivocal concerns. Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty's insistence on the whole "body-schema" involved in knowing is helpful to draw out the implications of Maximus' articulation as to how the human gains knowledge of God and all of reality. Maximus is explicit in human knowing as conditioned by the body.

All the intelligible thoughts that derive from his goodness we shall know as a body, and all the things made perceived through the sense as a garment.¹⁰⁴

This full perceiving "as a body" is for Maximus a spiritual body; however, it is not a spiritual body in the abstract, even if only fully realized in the celestial realm. Rather, through inhabiting the virtues this spiritual body is made present in this life. It is, says Maximus' the flesh's participation in the flesh of Christ that is met with knowledge.¹⁰⁵ There is a permeation without confusion, and through such participation one acquires "the entire fullness of grace."¹⁰⁶ The virtues hereby illumine the image within. This illumination

¹⁰³ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 60, 77.

¹⁰⁴ Maximus, *Difficulty* 10, 1132D.

¹⁰⁵ This is also found in Cyril of Alexandria's commentary on John, "since we too are united with the flesh of the Savior in the same way as that flesh is united with the Word that dwells within it" (*Commentary on John*, 4.2, 361c).

¹⁰⁶ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, II.87.

occurs by the human's giving herself over to the virtuous disposition, which the Logos meets with grace. It is not

by losing our own bodies and becoming his, nor because he passes into us in his person or is divided up in our members. Rather, it is because the corruption of sin is shaken off in a likeness to the Lord's flesh.¹⁰⁷

Maximus here follows Gregory of Nyssa who states that, "it is the function of our free will to have the power to take on the form of whatever it chooses."¹⁰⁸ Whether or not to share in the knowledge of God's knowing "depends on the will of rational beings."¹⁰⁹ It is a spiritual knowing deeply entrenched in the flesh. All knowing is a knowing in the flesh, either ordered by the flesh of God in Christ or according to an irrational love of the body.¹¹⁰

The saint is paradigmatic for this exemplary knowing, for the saint is she who has through the ascetic struggle become worthy of *who she is*—a portion of God. Through the ascetic struggle the saint makes manifest in her body "the virtuous disposition that is hidden in the depth of the soul"¹¹¹—the image of God. The saint reveals the reciprocal life that God has established with his creation in her body, in her virtuous action that manifests God. "For a work is proof of a disposition."¹¹²

God and man are paradigms one of another... , and as much as man is caught up by God to what is known in his mind, so much does man manifest God, who is invisible by nature, through the virtues.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, II.84.

¹⁰⁸ Cited in *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), *Chapters on Love*, fn143.

¹⁰⁹ Maximus, *Chapters on Love*, 3.27.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.57; see also Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.119. Gregory reminds that the divine nature "manifests itself in the way that one is capable of receiving," and the capacity of the human for knowledge occurs only through the flesh—the embodied knowing, as discussed above, whereby physical sense becomes spiritual sense.

¹¹¹ Maximus, *Difficulty 10*, 1108B-C.

¹¹² Maximus, *Mystagogy*, XXIV.

¹¹³ Maximus, *Difficulty 10*, 1113B-C.

For this reason, God makes himself manifest by grace proportionately to her who makes God manifest in the flesh.¹¹⁴ This proportionate revelation is Maximus' phenomenological departure, as it were, though there is no divisiveness between the ontological and phenomenological for him. The experiential manifesting is always an ontological manifesting of a person's contingent relation to the Eternal.

Virtuous activity is always met by the presence of the Spirit, "who directly transfigures the body and soul altogether into something more divine."¹¹⁵ Again, operative in the human subject is the Word, and it is this Word that is met by the presence of the Spirit to transform the human, having voluntarily entered into herself in God through virtuous habituation and contemplation, thereby receiving in a mystical possession the Holy Trinity.¹¹⁶ This possessing is the humans' assimilation to the Word, thereby rendering the human subject one with the Son in his return to the Father. As evidenced in the patristic articulation of the perichoresis, likewise is there with Maximus a clear sense of how the human participates in her assimilation and enters into the being-known of God.

Knowledge is not to be understood as a conceptual grappling of a subject with an object; rather, it is a sharing in who God is.¹¹⁷ This is directly related in Aristotle's understanding of knowledge, in terms of being and becoming. The human knows what it is to be just by doing just acts, by which she becomes just.¹¹⁸ To know the Good is to become good. The human does not enter into the subject-object relation of modernity; rather, with Aristotle knowledge and action are fused together in such a way that the two co-inhere in the actor. When the actor-knower, having been formed by the virtues, does the good act because it is good it is then that she can be said to be good. It is

¹¹⁴ Maximus, *Chapters on Love*, IV.70; see also Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.140. Gregory discusses how God "changes his power in diverse ways to suit those who eat... making his message strong meat for the more mature and greens for the weaker and milk for little children."

¹¹⁵ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, I.46.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II.71. Or, following Cyril of Alexandria, such participation is a baptism into the Trinity (*Commentary on John*, 1.9, 93.).

¹¹⁷ Williams, Rowan. *The Wound of Knowledge* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), 13.

¹¹⁸ Aristotle, *NE*, II.

in this way that St. Paul clearly employs Aristotle in his articulation of doing good apart from love.

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.¹¹⁹

As with Aristotle and in the ancient world, crucial to human action is the manner in which that action is carried out.¹²⁰ It is this passage in Paul's letter to the Corinthians that Maximus picks up to stage knowing as an incarnate relation to that which is known.¹²¹ Knower and the manner of her engagement with that which is known and the person, place or thing that is known can only be separated intellectually. There is no subject-object divide, nor is there a Hegelian conflation of the two. Rather, the particular form of engagement that the subject engages her object establishes a particular relation between the two. With regard to relationships between persons, explicitly for Maximus that relationship between God and the human, the movement is always reciprocal and conditioned reciprocally. God has established in the soul the human capacity to engage God reciprocally, but God only moves upon the human according to her ability to receive. This proportionality, as aforesaid, is that which is made possible by a voluntary conditioning of human perception by which one comes to *possess* this love. For, says Maximus, "direct experience suspends rational knowledge of a thing and direct 'perception' of it renders the 'conceptual knowledge' of it useless."¹²² The acquisition of knowledge is hereby best understood as the deification of the

¹¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 13.1-3.

¹²⁰ Sorabji, Richard, "Aristotle on the Role of Intellect in Virtue," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 203.

¹²¹ Maximus, *Ad Thalassium* 60, 78.

¹²² *Ibid.*

human, becoming in likeness through virtue what she is in truth—the image of God.¹²³

Aristotle’s articulation as to how one acquires knowledge of the Good is important for following this line with Maximus. “Each man,” says Aristotle, “judges correctly those matters with which he is acquainted.”¹²⁴ The question then is how does one gain such an acquaintance? Is it through Socratic discourse? Is it an endowed feature of human existence, individual pursuit, independent study, a matter of *phronesis*? By what means is this right judgment available to a person? It is certainly the case that, like all animals, humans are capable of a certain level of intuition, especially that which is gained through experience, and that education can form the mind in the truth, but Aristotle ensures that it is not that simple. An all around education is necessary for the attainment of knowledge. Education and *phronesis* (practical wisdom) are lost, however, on those led by feeling, those carried away by passion. Such persons will study to no purpose or advantage.¹²⁵ Age is not a factor here; it is character that is essential to the acquisition of knowledge. Educating persons who have not been formed by virtuous habits is of no use.¹²⁶ You can teach a person what the Good is, but to those who have not been rightly formed for judgment such teaching will, in the end, remain incomprehensible.

Aristotle is chiefly concerned with the ultimate Good, participation in which brings about *eudaimonia*—happiness, but more akin to something like *human flourishing*. Happiness for the human, then, is a matter of becoming the end to which she is moved—the Good, “that at which all things aim.”¹²⁷ Knowledge of the Supreme Good or ultimate end, is participatory and acquired only when a person’s thinking and doing are harmoniously aligned and aimed at her true end. A person’s true self, for Aristotle—Intellect—is made known to her to the extent of her participation in knowing all things in relation to the Supreme Good. For Aristotle, knowledge is not merely a matter

¹²³ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, II.88.

¹²⁴ Aristotle, *NE*, I.iii.5.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, I.iii.7.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, I.i.2.

of cognition. It is intentional and voluntary activity directed toward the ultimate end that is rightly understood as knowledge. Knowledge is also natural. That is, the human has a predisposition to knowledge. Knowledge is, therefore, essential to human nature, though it is not said to be a *necessary* activity. One can choose to remain ignorant.

Maximus' understanding of how one gains knowledge is closely aligned to that of Aristotle's. Virtue makes God to condescend to be human by the human's assumption of divine properties (*logoi*).¹²⁸ It is in this way that the Unmoved is moved, not by any other than himself, but by the portion of God within each. The human cannot affect God; rather, God affects God by his movement upon the soul that also moves the body in virtue. It is in this particular way that the human is made to permeate divinity. Accordingly, when Christ *is moved* with pity by the widow whose only son has died (Luke 7.11-16), his *being-moved* is not to be understood as external to himself. It is the logos within each that meets the Logos. Only God affects God.

It has been necessary to trace in Maximus how the human acquires the necessary disposition to know God, and thereby knows all things in their contingent relation to the Eternal, in order to show how Maximus relates this knowing to the liturgy in his *Mystagogy*. All habituation in virtue that enjoins "the various essences of beings" to their creator occurs only in the Church's imitative, liturgical activity.¹²⁹

III

Crucial to Maximus' understanding of how the human gains awareness of her being-in-God is the church's liturgy.

The holy Church of God is an image of God because it realizes the same union of the faithful with God. As different as they are by language, places, and customs, they are made one by it through faith. God realizes this union among the natures of things without confusing them but in lessening and bringing

¹²⁸ Maximus, *Letter 2*, 408B.

¹²⁹ Maximus, *Mystagogy*, I, XXIV.

together their distinction, as was shown, in a relationship and union with himself as cause, principle, and end.¹³⁰

Liturgy, for Maximus, is the imprint and image of God.¹³¹ Knowledge, therefore, is gained solely through an active encounter with God in, by, and through the movements of holy synaxis. It is this direct and proportionate encounter with God that fuses particular natures (heavenly and earthly) together in an unconfused union with God and consequentially with all others. This is the “special” grace that is given at the time of holy synaxis.

This grace transforms and changes each person who is found there and in fact remolds him in proportion to what is more divine in him and leads him to what is revealed through the mysteries which are celebrated....¹³²

The ascetic struggle, in this light, is the bodily comportment that opens the human to receive a greater portion of this special grace that God bestows upon her in liturgy, so to realize this inseparability of all things. All things are bound together by the singular force of their relationship to God as origin.¹³³ The human, therefore, is most fully herself, with all her distinctive peculiarities, when and only when she knows herself properly in her being-known with the Son in his eternal divine-human permeation. For Maximus, the incarnation manifests the absolute and unconfused union, not simply between the Son and an individual human nature, but of all things in Christ who incarnates himself proportionately in all who willingly participate in his kenosis. This emptying of oneself for Christ’s sake is an emptying that makes manifest the true, divine portion within a person. In this way does the human know herself in the exclusive relation to her Cause—God. By this voluntary emptying of oneself God restores the human in a marvelous way to herself, which is a returning of the human back to her origin—God.¹³⁴

The human bears a communal relation to all things by virtue of her relation to the divine community that is the Trinity, in whom all are naturally

¹³⁰ Maximus, *Mystagogy*, II.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, I.

¹³² *Ibid.*, XXIV.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, V.

bound. There is no relation between particular natures apart from each's particular relation to its Cause. The church of God hereby serves as the working out of the divine-human and human-human relation. Through its worship—its participation in and imitation of the Son's worship of the Father in the Spirit—the human receives her identity as *leitourgon* (liturgist) of the *Leitourgon* (Liturgist). Left to her own, the human is but individual, tamed only by the passions of the flesh; through active participation in perichoretic reciprocity, made available through God's holy vessel the church, the human receives her identity as a truly communal being, one who has been adopted through Christ into the perichoresis.

The church is an archetype of the Archetype, wherein each person receives the deifying grace, so to at once remain distinct, all the while being permeated by divinity. The human comes to know herself by knowing herself in relation to God, being incorporated into God, *becoming God* through participation.¹³⁵ It is this, says Maximus, that occurs in holy synaxis.

By holy communion of the spotless and life-giving mysteries we are given fellowship and identity with him by participation in likeness, by which man is deemed worthy from man to become God.¹³⁶

In other words, to have the ascetic struggle without receiving the mysteries communicated to humanity by God through the church is insufficient. Grace, while proportionately received, is always given and never achieved. It is this that relieves Maximus' *praktike* of any hint of an Evagrian soteriology. This form of asceticism is a participation in the singular kenosis of the Son. All is participation! Therefore, there can be no ascetic action of a person that is not initiated and completed in Christ.

The force here is the consistent drawing out of an image-likeness distinction. This distinction comes full circle in Maximus' description of the relationship between the nave and the sanctuary of the church as an image of man. The church is an "image and figure of God;" just as image is to the soul and likeness (figure) is to the body, likewise is the image/soul to the sanctuary

¹³⁵ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge*, II.88.

¹³⁶ Maximus, *Mystagogy*, XXIV.

and likeness/body to the nave.¹³⁷ The reciprocal movements that take place between sanctuary and nave are analogous to those that occur between soul and body. It is this reciprocity that has been restored in Christ's unconfused union, which is manifest in the entrance of the bishop and people into the church for liturgy. The seventh century liturgy in which Maximus would have engaged began with an entrance of the bishop and the people. The bishop's entrance is a "figure and image of the first appearance in the flesh of Jesus Christ the son of God and our Savior in this world."¹³⁸ The people's entrance behind the bishop "represents the conversion of the unfaithful from faithlessness to faith..., from vice and ignorance to virtue and knowledge."¹³⁹ Inasmuch as one is entering into the church as having shed the *old man*, to this proportionate extent is the participant "properly and truly considered and spoken of as entering with God our God and High Priest into virtue."¹⁴⁰ In the Byzantine church especially is it understood that the faithful, in stepping into the church, the believer has one foot firmly planted on earth and the other in heaven. Further, the bishop's entrance into the sanctuary and ascent to the priestly throne is likewise a figure and image of the Son's ascension into heaven and his return to the heavenly throne.¹⁴¹

The scripture readings that follow express the "divine wishes and intentions in accordance with which everyone should conform and conduct himself."¹⁴² These readings instruct the faithful in conduct, teaching them to progress in all virtue by submitting to the divine law and commandments. It also signifies the contemplative habits of those who have knowledge through virtue, whereby the faithful are borne to the truth.¹⁴³ The Gospel reading itself symbolizes the fulfillment of this world.¹⁴⁴ It is the movement of error into truth, a move from multiplicity into unity.

¹³⁷ Maximus, *Mystagogy*, XXIV.

¹³⁸ Ibid., VIII.

¹³⁹ Ibid., IX.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., VIII.

¹⁴² Ibid., XXIV.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., XXIV.

After the Gospel and preaching, the catechumens are exited from the church by the bishop, which signifies Christ's separation of sinners and saints and a perfect detachment from misaligned passions and desires of the material or flesh. Upon closing the doors of the church, leaving only within its walls the faithful, what is signified here is the progress of the faithful from *praktike*, to *theoria*, to *theologia*.¹⁴⁵ One must first be formed by the virtues, as explored above, and thereby enter into contemplation where all is seen in its contingent relation to divinity. *Theologia* is made available only to those who have been so formed and disciplined, and is received only through the mystical service that is the liturgy. In the liturgy is the cause, logic and end of the progression from *praktike*, to *theoria*, to *theologia*. This progression is a return to the principle and intent of God in human nature. The church's intent is hereby to bestow upon each person the singular divine form of the Liturgy-Christ. It is the manifesting of the inherent potency for *theologia* within the human, making available the life of virtue and the habits of contemplation, and to communicate through the sacraments the grace of God that raises one into *theologia*, the knowledge that occurs only in the experience of consuming God in the Eucharist so to receive deification.

Deification, then, exists in the human in potency, which is drawn out by virtuous action (*praktike*), ordered by contemplation of the natural world (*theoria*), fulfilled when met by the grace of God and the human contemplates God in himself (*theologia*). "This marks a perpetual and unceasing movement toward the knowable which transcends knowledge,"¹⁴⁶ whereby rational knowledge is suspended in its direct perception through Christ.

The knowledge of all that has come to be through Him is naturally and properly made known together with Him. For just as with the rising of the sensible sun all bodies are made known, so it is with God, the intelligible sun of righteousness, rising in the mind: although He is known to be separate from the created order, He wishes the true meanings of everything,

¹⁴⁵ Andrew Louth, trans., *Maximus the Confessor* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 42-44.

¹⁴⁶ Maximus, *Mystagogy*, V.

whether intelligible or sensible, to be made known together
with Himself.¹⁴⁷

Having recapitulated all things in himself, Christ at once reveals the inherent goodness of human nature and God's insistence to fulfill the original intent of creation. All of this is comprehensible only through the sacred order of the mysteries available in the holy church of God.¹⁴⁸

What I seek to show here with Maximus is how the church, at least through the seventh century, is intent to show clearly that the constituting of human identity occurs in its virtuous habituation of the faithful in knowledge and contemplation, brought to completion by the manifesting grace of God through the mysteries. It is a distinctly sacramental and participatory ontology that is found throughout the writings of the early fathers, clearly evidenced in the writings of Maximus. Knowledge is action; contemplation is habit; deification is the perpetual movement made possible by each, met with grace, that reconstitutes the human to her original constitution as logos of the Logos. All occurs in, by, and through Christ. God as cause is the ultimate "background" for the human, which lies hidden to her apart from the bodily comportment of liturgical participation. This is the being, well being and eternal being of which Maximus speaks in *Difficulty 10*. Being and eternal being are God's alone, whereas well-being names the bodily comportment through virtue and contemplation covered in this chapter. Through volitive participation the human comes to exist in the extremes, being and eternal being, made free from any relationship to anything other than God, thereby enabled to relate to all things as God.¹⁴⁹ The reason or logic of this total relating to God, and only thereby consequentially relating to all others, is manifest and available only through the liturgy of holy church.

Conclusion

The true knowledge of which Maximus speaks is gained only by participation, that is, only through participation in the mysteries that moves, by contact with

¹⁴⁷ Maximus, *Difficulty 10*, 27.1156AB.

¹⁴⁸ Maximus, *Mystagogy*, XXIV.

¹⁴⁹ Maximus, *Difficulty 10*, 3-5.

what is known, the human beyond all conceptualization.¹⁵⁰ Because knowledge and knowing solely exists within the Trinity,¹⁵¹ access is granted only through participatory manifesting in liturgy. Liturgy hereby instructs and makes sense of all human activity. The being, well-being, eternal being paradigm set forth by Maximus describes the portion of God within the human (being) and the intent of God for the human (eternal being), leaving in the middle a person's volitional activity (well-being) that brings together in herself the two extremes, consummated by the "Spirit's bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" by adoption (Romans 8.16).¹⁵² Adoption is key for Maximus, as act and habit—knowledge and contemplation—moves one beyond a terrestrial genealogy, entering into *theologia* where one knows him/herself only in relation to God.¹⁵³ Again, this is the transfiguring of the human made available only through the church's mysteries, proportionately received by each through one's bodily comportment in virtue and contemplation.

The intention of the church rests in its liturgical movement from, in and toward God. It is a particular sort of gaze. The liturgical action is to gaze; it is a comportment of the body whereby vision is a vision by proximity. It is a construal of the human imaginary that works upon the body to know oneself as more than the air one breathes or the blood that courses through the veins, so that the human realizes herself as the life of one wholly infused with the fullness of God that transcends any body-soul divide, being made God by the kenotic giving of the Son.¹⁵⁴ Akin to Merleau-Ponty's articulation of the gaze as a modality of movement,¹⁵⁵ Maximus presses how knowledge is a gaze

¹⁵⁰ One sees this understanding of knowledge as contact or proximity with God, or lack thereof by assimilation to evil, in Gregory the Great, offering the same imperative to contemplate the body as does Maximus: "they are illuminated by the [True Light] of the living, and they perceive it more clearly the more purely they live according to it" (Mor. 24.12.35). See Carole Ellen Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 194-235.

¹⁵¹ Maximus, *Ad Thalassium* 60, 78.

¹⁵² Romans 8 is key for Maximus, especially in *Difficulty 10*, outlining the intent of God in creating and how it is that the manifesting through participation is a drawing out of the spiritual principle (*logoi*) within each that is assimilated and reconstituted in Christ.

¹⁵³ Maximus, *Difficulty 10*, 20.1140-1145.

¹⁵⁴ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 3.1088BC.

¹⁵⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 78.

upon Christ, which is the force of proportional receiving of knowledge.¹⁵⁶ That is, inasmuch as one engages in her well-being through participation is the extent to which God meets her with grace, not because God is limited by human conditioning, rather because God will not make a slave of the human but a friend.

The bodily intending of the human in the church's liturgy is the constituting of human understanding in her relation to God, self, others, things, and so on. Any and all knowledge, therefore, arises and is made manifest to the subject by virtue of this liturgical intending of the body. As found in Merleau-Ponty, there is no abstract knowledge available to the human because of the inseparability of the body and mind, the body provides the background and conditions of knowing.¹⁵⁷ Likewise is there found in Maximus the same relation to how one knows and is known.¹⁵⁸ The human is a body-soul union, and in the reciprocal movement between the two is knowledge made manifest. One can only know God in the flesh, which is the whole thrust of the incarnation. Knowledge for the human then has as its paradigm the incarnation of the Son, which also manifests the rising incarnation within each person that occurs universally by the singular act of God in Christ.

Liturgy, then, is the total experience of the faith of the church, which constitutes and conditions one's perception of God and all things.¹⁵⁹ Liturgy is always more than conditioning perception, however, as is clearly expressed in Maximus. It could be said that for Maximus, liturgy is the absolute unconfused union of phenomenology and ontology. The divine-human destiny that God established in his very creating of humanity in his image is an ontological conditioning to reciprocity with God.¹⁶⁰ Because Christ is himself *the* Liturgy, and because only God can love God,¹⁶¹ the human's being-in-God is constitutive of her *being-in-the-liturgy*. It is in the church's

¹⁵⁶ Maximus, *Chapters on Love*, 4.55-77.

¹⁵⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 84-102.

¹⁵⁸ Maximus, *Chapters on Love*, III.57.

¹⁵⁹ Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission*, 133.

¹⁶⁰ Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 55.

¹⁶¹ Maximus, *Letter 2*, 397BC.

liturgical action that God brings together the extremes of being and eternal being with the church's volitive participation in the Liturgy-Christ. What is made manifest in this experience of liturgical participation is the true ontological nature of the human as recapitulated and assimilated to the Son, residing now within the perichoretic life of Holy Trinity.

It is the particularity and peculiarity of its ascetic struggle, prayer, and thanksgiving that the church is enabled by the Spirit to condition the human to manifest this truth of her contingent reality. Crucial, here, is proportionality. Proportionality has to do with one's active struggle in a holy detachment from the flesh, not a flight from the flesh, and an active participating in the liturgical movements themselves. Presence in liturgy is key, but the active hearing, praying to, and ultimately eating God is the crux of liturgical conditioning. Only through a full participation of this sort is the human capable of knowing herself in the divine-human relation of reciprocity. Again, knowledge is act, and apart from the liturgical action knowledge of one's ontological nature is unavailable.

The church's liturgy as a participation in *the* Liturgy Christ *is* is key, for knowledge of God only comes as knowledge of the Son,¹⁶² who is able to be perceived only through the liturgical manifesting of the logos within each person. One could speak of the church's liturgy as a midwife, but not completely in the Socratic sense, for what lies within must be known from the outside, i.e. through the mysteries. Human identity is consummated in the mysteries, and while virtue and habit open one to this awareness, the truth of being comes through contact with God in the mysteries and only then does one know.

What is made-manifest in the ascetic struggle, prayer, and participation in the cosmic mystery of Christ *the* Liturgy is a remolding and restructuring of human sensibilities so to perceive the world as a body-soul unity, eternally existent in its relation to God, manifest in the present tension of this fulfilled-potency. It is in becoming what she is in liturgy that the human knows her divine potency and assimilation to the Son, having already been recapitulated and gathered into divine reciprocity. Participation in liturgy, once again, is

¹⁶² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.vi.7 (ANF).

crucial to the human's acquisition of knowing herself utterly contingent upon God in his own being-known, realizing her true self as known *with* the Son in the community of Holy Trinity. Without participating in this embodied construal of human sensibilities to the Liturgy-Christ, knowledge of self, others, or Truth remains distant and unachievable.¹⁶³ It is only liturgy that makes knowledge of the self in its exclusive relation to God available, which renders all other relations contingent upon this singular relation of the subject with God. It is an acquisition that comes from being "ravished by divine knowledge."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ One can see this most explicitly in Cyril of Alexandria: "For those who do not receive Jesus through the sacrament will continue to remain utterly bereft of any share in the life of holiness and blessedness without any taste of it whatsoever" (*Commentary on John*, 4.2, 361b). As with Ambrose, and in a real sense Aristotle, Cyril is clear that there is no knowledge available and no point to investigation without first coming to the faith in liturgy (*Commentary on John*, 4.2, 360b-e).

¹⁶⁴ Maximus, *Chapters on Love*, I.12.

4 Deranging the Senses

“In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered.”

– T. S. Eliot

Introduction

As I have shown above, what is normative for the early church, especially as highlighted by Maximus Confessor, is that the liturgy is a distinctly participatory action that creates time and space to be inhabited as a sensible and sensing world or cosmos. Liturgy hereby illuminates human nature in its contingent reality in God by making possible the self-illumination of this reality for its participants. The manifesting of human nature through the church’s liturgical action is hereby inseparable from the ontological self-mediation of God in the Eucharist. Knowledge of God is inseparable from this liturgical activity. Likewise, the human’s true self is illuminated or made-manifest in proportion to her participation in the ontological encounter with God in the liturgical action.

This understanding of active self-illuminating is not new with the church and its liturgical formation. Who a person understands herself to be is inseparable from the activities in which a person engages and through which a person relates to the social body. This is attested to as early as the fifth century BC by Heraclitus.¹ How one participates in the common manifests or illuminates a certain selfhood through the disciplines of the social body. A person becomes just, says Aristotle, by doing just acts. In like manner, a person knows they are just by doing just acts. However, what is just is not an independent reality apart from the relations involved in a society or

¹ Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*, 27-28.

community that uses the word “just” in particular ways.² What is complicated in terms of one’s awareness is that knowledge is always a shared knowledge. “I” do not know anything; only “We” can know. What is “just” is socially construed, which means that “justice,” like everything else, refuses universality. Defining “justice” is not the concern here; however, understanding the social construal of the meaning of words is. As Merleau-Ponty states, “All knowledge takes its place within the horizons opened up by perception,”³ opened by all the environmental factors that have been shaping the human imaginary up to that point, whether known to her or not—most often not. It is what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as *habitus*, a kind of subconscious bodily comportment that gives rise to a particular way of perceiving the world, or making meaning in and of the world.⁴

As argued in the previous chapter, it is one’s participation in this liturgical comportment of the body that conditions the human’s knowledge of herself as an exclusive relation to God and a consequential relation to all things in their contingent reality by the same. The very form of knowing is a knowledge, is that which provides the possibility to know whatever enters the perceptive gaze of the subject.⁵ Without a form of participation that opens the subject to such an active bodily perceiving, whereby all are formatively aware of each’s assimilation to the Eternal Logos, all that is left is an autonomous, sovereign individual, i.e. secular humanism, one capable only of relating to the other as wholly other or completely identical—either absolutely separable or lacking difference altogether. This will be teased out further later.

What I seek to press in the following section is the point introduced in the last chapter regarding a substance-oriented and function-oriented ontology, which will become more explicit in dealing with the Eucharist in the following chapter. It is important first to show how signs, symbols, and the various movements of and on the body create what Merleau-Ponty calls horizons of

² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. G. H. Von Wright and Heikki Nyman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 85e.

³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 241.

⁴ Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 53.

⁵ As with Merleau-Ponty and Maximus, the “gaze” and “perception” are the (social) conditionings carried about in the body that, even unconsciously, postures the subject to inhabit the world in particular ways.

expectation, and to relate this specifically to liturgy. I will introduce this firstly by engaging with Ivan Illich's description of tools and how they limit and extend the range of human knowing, i.e. how they give way to particular horizons of expectation. Illich's description of socially construed tools relates directly to the "tools" of liturgy. With Illich, tools are socially constituted for constricting and extending the range of human freedom. They most always serve either to extend the range of human capabilities or transform the human into a mere user of tools. Most often, the human's creative agency is transfigured into a tool for consumptive ends. As the machinery of industrial society predestines the human to an intellectual stagnation proportionate to her bodily tooling, whereby the human is alienated from the *end* of production by her inverted relation to the product as its *means*; likewise, the late Medieval Christian is reconditioned by a similar retooling that suspends the divine-human relation in its delimiting of signs and symbols in the liturgical action. The liturgical participant ceases to have a function—an active role—severing act from actor and what is created by the coherence of both.

Illich's crucial insight is that tools are intrinsic to human relations within a social body.⁶ As such, the human relates herself in action to society through the use of her tools, which she either masters or is passively acted upon.⁷ To the degree that a person masters a tool is the degree to which that person can invest her world with meaning; however, inasmuch as she is mastered by her tools who she knows herself to be will be determined by the form of the tool itself. As the formative means of human relating, tools will be formed to suit the relational structures of the dominant culture, which will “naturally” assimilate its users to that culture. Think of the credit card in modern society. The credit card is a tool for purchasing; however, it is a tool that relates individuals to consumer institutions, and limits relations between individuals and institutions or persons who do not receive credit card payments. I cannot go to the farmer's market in my home town and use a credit card to purchase fruits and vegetables; I must have cash—another tool for human relating. Those who are so accustomed to using a credit card for all

⁶ Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1973), 21.

⁷ *Ibid.*

their purchases, especially to the extent that they no longer carry cash in their wallet, are less likely to go to a farmer's market where this form of payment will not be received, even if they in theory would prefer to purchase local produce. The credit card can and does limit the human imaginary, not just because it enables many not to carry cash, but because it is a tool of relating, limiting relations to mutual users, but primarily between human individuals and institutions. This is very much evidenced by the ATM or gas stations that have "pay at the pump." No human contact is necessary for your banking transaction or fuel. In this way, the credit card actually prevents its user from getting to know the teller or attendant. As a relational tool, it selects who one should and should not enter into relation.

This is along the same vein that I seek to show how liturgical restructuring delimits human relations by constricting who is able to relate to God in the liturgy—who is able to *invest the liturgy with meaning*. Just as tools with industrial and capitalist societies delimit human relations to spectator-consumers, so also does medieval liturgical practices reconstitute the common Christian as a passive and autonomous subject whose relation to God is suspended by the tool that once made her relation to God possible.

I

In his "Tools for Conviviality," Ivan Illich seeks to reconstruct the human imaginary to comprehend tools as intrinsic to how one relates to others within the social body.⁸ Tools have a way of bringing the social body together in closer proximity; however, they can also serve to distance the social body in ways unforeseen. Take for instance the automobile, to use one of Illich's examples. The purpose of the automobile was to decrease the space and time between two points; however, the "watershed" of transportation served only to create more distance and use more time both in production and traffic, reducing society to a virtual enslavement to the car.⁹ The greater issue, however, as Illich points out, is how tools of industry have ceased to be an extension of the human, enhancing each person's range of freedom, but now

⁸ Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*, 20.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

“work” for them, as money “works” in capitalism, reducing the human to a spectator or at best manipulator of machines, limiting the human to a mere consumer-slave.¹⁰

Kurt Vonnegut’s “Player Piano” is a fascinating exploration of this very occurrence. In the “Player Piano,” society is divided essentially into two classes: engineers and “Reeks and Wrecks.” Paul, an engineer in this industrial, machine-governed society, becomes involved in a pseudo-revolution with the usual suspects. Coming to realize the all pervasiveness of machines in society that sustain class divisions and limit the range of human freedom, Paul enlists those who have been abused by machinery. Paul is in turmoil, however, because it may mean the end of his marriage. His life as an engineer, from a family of engineers, is profitable and Paul is in line for the top posts in the country, a beautiful home, family, everything a bourgeois man could ever want. Consistently wrestling with what he has to lose, Paul goes on to sacrifice all for the ideal of a human flourishing that involves living a life where work is done with his own bare hands, perhaps even farming and growing plants of all things. The revolution takes place; all the machines are smashed. But what happens next leaves Paul in utter turmoil. The people have risen up and knocked down the reigning powers of the machine. However, when the machines that worked for, not with, individuals have been broken into pieces, because of their all pervasive impact on the human imaginary the only thing the revolutionaries can think to do is to repair the machines. The force of the machine on perceived human flourishing has been too overwhelming to overturn, and once shattered the only thing left to do is to put the pieces of the machine back together. The revolution fails because there is no alternative tool or retooling, only the destruction of tools, which only mimics what the tools of the machine have done to its users.

John Ruskin’s imperative rings true, “You must either make a tool of the creature, or a man of him. You cannot make both.”¹¹ That is, either the human will be a slave to do the work of another or she will be an artist who makes her way in the world as a creator. Illich’s argument is not to hereby do

¹⁰ Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*, 10-11.

¹¹ John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice* (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1867), 161.

away with tools or machines or to demonize them in any way. He realizes that tools are essential to social relations. Nevertheless, the meaning of a tool does not simply reside in its use; rather, the tool itself bears a sort of implicit imaginary.¹² It is something along the lines of the adage, “To a man with a hammer everything is a nail.” While the hammer can be used for many things, it nevertheless *desires*, in the Aristotelian sense, to pound and be used for pounding, whether it is a nail or the head of an enemy. It is simple enough to say that while a tool’s function can be reoriented, as in the case of turning swords into plowshares or spears into pruning hooks (Isaiah 2.4); however, without the reconstituting of certain tools, the sword and spear can only be imagined as weapons of death and destruction.

A convivial reconstruction is necessary, then, a “re-tooling” if you will. Illich contrasts conviviality with industrial productivity. Whereas industrialism enslaves the human to machinery, reducing the individual to a consumer of goods over which she has no control in fashioning or producing, conviviality promotes a social freedom of interdependence for each, which seeks to satisfy the needs of human flourishing in society while enjoining the individual to its governance.¹³ That is, conviviality will free the human to fashion goods reciprocally with the whole of society, binding differing cultures together in an economy akin to a gift economy, though Illich does not make this explicit reference. What is key for a convivial restructuring of human society is contingent upon a reconstituting of tools whereby each person is able to defend their liberty and offer a careful analysis of the inherent nature of tools as means.¹⁴ The convivial tool, then, will be an extension of the human—especially in the sense of tools as intrinsic to social relations, in such a way that increases human flourishing on the whole and does not remove the productive action from the energy of its user. A convivial tool will often reduce the amount of human energy needed for creating; however, it must not eliminate human action. For instance, a standard vacuum cleaner enables a person to clean the carpets with minimal human energy;

¹² Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 41-47.

¹³ Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*, 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

however, a robotic vacuum requires one only to push the button to turn it on. The robotic vacuum hereby promotes the uncleanliness it is designed to remove, for the cleaning process is removed from human action. Cleaning is transformed by the robotic tool to be something machines do, not humans. Analogies will forever breakdown in this regard, for carpet itself may not promote conviviality, as it creates a further dependency on electricity and more machines to maintain it. Nevertheless, the point is that convivial tools must increase the dignity of human activity, even if it lightens the exertion of human energy. Inasmuch as a tool reduces the human to a passive spectator or eliminates her involvement in creative actions, the human ceases to have a telos. By becoming a means she ceases to *mean* anything. To state the matter plainly, a convivial tool gives life by enhancing human action, a non-convivial tool takes life away by eliminating human action. Movement itself does not imply life, however; rather, it is volitive movement *toward* that manifests life. It is *aiming at* and an increasing awareness both of one's aiming and that at which one is aiming.

Certain tools may be inherently destructive, says Illich, inasmuch as they increase human exploitation, dependence, or impotence, robbing rich and poor of conviviality.¹⁵ Take a gun, for instance. The inherent logic of the gun is to inflict violence, even if not to kill. It is designed to penetrate its object with a violent force. Even if used for defense or skeet shooting one cannot escape its inherent logic. Not all tools used violently, however, bear this necessary logic. One may recall Orville Wright's comment about the airplane he and his brother were constructing, a flying tool.

When my brother and I built and flew the first man-carrying flying machine, we thought that we were introducing into the world an invention which would make further wars practically impossible....¹⁶

This is obviously not what the airplane provided for modern warfare. It did not eliminate war but has and continues to make war more and more possible. It is for this reason that a careful analysis of the basic structure of tools is

¹⁵ Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*, 26.

¹⁶ Orville Wright, 1917.

requisite. What are the “structuring structures” that lie within the social body that constitute the tool *as*?¹⁷ The logic of capital and industry construe the tool as an end rather than a means—as modern warfare did with the man-carrying flying machine, which inverts the relation of tool and user such that the human becomes the means—the medium between consumable objects. That is, the human becomes a tool. Tools become ends when they begin to *work*, as Illich notes this transition in the English language at least since 1600.¹⁸ The human thus transitions from a fashioner of tools for her work, whereby her exertion and what she produces are situated within the logic of herself as end, to become the means to the end that is the tool, separating the human from both action and product. This exploitation of the individual renders the human impotent and utterly dependent on the tool, the *work* of which eternally suspends her from its product.

The efficient tooling of society leads the human into a whole new set of relations between her tools and others. Men and women go from *working with* their tools to *powering* their tools with human energy, and then begin *operating* tools with “abstract” power. Human action has since nearly been replaced altogether by the machine. Engineers, as seen in Vonnegut’s “Player Piano,” have developed machines that increasingly reduce the number of operators needed for its production. Greater mechanical power reduced the need for human power, which comports human labor to jobs within cubicles that serve primarily to analyze the working of the machines and how to develop newer machines that require less and less operators and fewer analysts. This continuous move toward greater efficiency, whereby efficiency means increased speed and greater productivity apart from human touch, reduces the individual to the tool of which Ruskin prophesied (of course by his time it was already too late).

The freedoms that individuals once had have largely been reduced with the rise of technologies designed to create greater freedom. Illich discusses the everyday peasant in Mexico during the early twentieth century, and how he would earn a living by walking his pig to the market to attain the necessary

¹⁷ Bourdieu, 53.

¹⁸ Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*, 30.

sustenance for daily life. No transport or packaging was needed, just a man and his pig and perhaps a rope around its neck. The automobile could not compete with the bicycle or foot within the city.¹⁹ In the 1940's and 50's, however, funds were pumped into building new roads to create swifter means of commerce. The consequence was that it created a new economy where the peasant could no longer bring his pig to market, thereby becoming reliant on industrially packaged commodities and bus transport to get him to and fro. The peasant now pays taxes for the roads that have eliminated his means of money making, all the while supporting and sustaining monopolies that promise to one day bring those same benefits of progress home to him.

Illich's point here has little to do with the particular peasant with his piggy going to market in Mexico; rather, it is a matter of the material forces that reconstitute human society, limiting human freedoms and forcing the individual into a labor force that she serves only for the sake of consuming the goods of the same market that enslaves her, all with the promise that her cooperation will be met with the fruits of this market. What we find in Illich's description is a particular construal of language, space and time. Language, space, and time cease to be tools in the convivial sense of their use toward human ends; rather, the linguistic shift occurs with the transition from space and time as creative human activities to become products for consumption—space and time as that within which products are produced and consumed. Human labor situated within the new categories of space and time can only be abstracted from individuals for the sake of buying and selling in the system of production.

The logic of production is the linguistic evacuation of time and space from human action that situates human action within abstract time and space, at once for the commodification of human action as purchasable labor as well as the commodification of time and space for the same. Time and space abstracted from human creative action reduces each, and everything within both, to something that can be measured universally, specifically measured by monetary valuation. Time and space cease to be bound up together with human action as that which measures and creates life and now serves to house

¹⁹ Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*, 36.

human creativity *as* productivity, construing human action as measurable only within the *body-schema* of the marketplace.²⁰ This, however, is the linguistic fictionalization of how the human subject relates to her world. To exist as body-mind, means that the human inhabits time and space, not that she is *in* time or space.²¹ The linguistic dislocation of human action from time and space proffered by the logic of production, by alienating human action from time and space also severs the mind from the body. The body does not inhabit space and time in a permeable relation with the whole of human society; rather, the body becomes productively measured within time and space, separating thought from action, suspending both from the present by removing each from its history or future. This is an ontological reduction of the human to a being *in-itself*, and likewise that of time and space. This fragmenting disassociates the multitude of relations that exist *in-the-between* of human existence. It is a radical division between subjectivity and objectivity, such that there is only absolute polarity between all things, lacking any sense of interdependency or “intervolvement,” to use Merleau-Ponty’s language.

What then does this make of the man and his pig in the market? The pig, once a means of relating man and market, now packaged as bacon in the refrigerator section of the grocery store, has been removed from the peasant and no longer connects him to the plethora of relations once shared. The man is now a consumer *in-himself*, relating only to packaged goods on the shelf, but not to those who once bargained and bartered for his pig. He exists autonomously, relating only to the market as consumer, abstracted from all relations that do not involve the consumption of like products.²² He is a tool (means) of the market (end). He now possesses market-time that he sells to the market as body labor, which he exchanges in the market for the consumption of goods that he, in many cases, has *produced*. The abstraction of time and space from human action nevertheless *works* on the body’s

²⁰ I am nuancing here Merleau-Ponty’s use of “body schema” to show that the conditions of reality, materially imposed on the human as a body-soul, construe the human imaginary to comprehend their particular “being-in-the-world” as existing in an intemporal time and abstract space to which they remain eternally detached. See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 112-170; Bourdieu, 80-111.

²¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 117.

²² Below it will be shown how this directly relates to the liturgical participant and her extraction from baking bread for Eucharist and participating in its procession in the offertory.

practical sense of its inhabiting the world. The human is disciplined neither to inhabit space nor time, but to remain *in-herself*—autonomous, which leads to a schizophrenic relation to herself as a mind who has a body and not as a body-mind whole. The only possible shared relation with the other, here, is as a non-involved, non-permeable, self-enclosed entity who relates to the other as a mutual consumer of identical products. This particular *state of mind* as that which transcends its body is only possible within a social order that disposes the body to relate to its mind in this particularly abstract way.²³ The body is conditioned by social mechanisms to recall certain ideas and thoughts that the subject is no less conditioned to think of as mere thoughts, capable of abstracting from the conditions at work on the body. Perception, here, is not the totality of perceiving found in Maximus or Merleau-Ponty; rather, perception according to the logic of production has to do with the mind stepping outside of the bodily experience to “re-frame” people, situations, events, etc., as affecting only one’s disembodied thought processes which can be overcome by simply “thinking” of the matter differently. Thinking is here reduced to a sort of transcendental cognition, not as inhabiting time and space in a mutually permeating relation of being and becoming.

Returning once again to the man and his pig, the product-construed imaginary that now conditions his being-in-the-world limits the freedom of his abstract mind to the *habitus* of the market that delimits his actions.²⁴ He is forced to buy back his body by a period of enslavement if he wishes to reunite it to his mind. Such a reunion remains unimaginable, however, or at best infinitely suspended. This is very much akin to Marx’s critique of capitalism. The consumer market system of the bourgeoisie is an economic enslavement that isolates the human from herself by the commodification of the end of her labor. The human’s productive actions cease to relate to her as its producer when the product is exchanged in the market with no regard for the person as

²³ Bourdieu, 66-79.

²⁴ Ibid: “Everything takes place as if the *habitus* forged coherence and necessity out of accident and contingency; as if it managed to unify the effects of the social necessity undergone from childhood, through the material conditions of existence, the primary relational experiences and the practice of structured actions, objects, spaces and times, and the effects of biological necessity, whether the influence of hormone balances or the weight of the visible characteristics of physique; as if it produced a biological reading of social properties and a social reading of sexual properties, thus leading to a social re-use of biological properties and a biological re-use of social properties” (79).

its producer. The producer has become a laborer; she works but she does not create. This alienation of the producer from her product nullifies the production as a transubstantiating force that endows the completed product with the life-energy of its producer. It is a sort of isolation of both the producer and the thing produced, which serves also to abstract the very actions involved in the production from their actor.

A person's actions, as purchasable, are not one's own but are owned by the one who pays for the actions to be enacted, and because the actions are bought and sold in the market that which is produced by the actions bear no attachment to their producer and are commodified in kind. When the human (producer) is separated from her actions (production) she becomes, as Marx contends, less than human. Marx understands production to be that which makes humans human.²⁵ It is *the* fundamental activity whereby the human comes to realize her selfhood. Self-illumination is in the act of creating, for what is created by her action retains a residue of her nature to such an extent that the products of human action are 'mirrors from which [human] essence shines forth.' The reciprocal relation between producer, production, and product is essential for the sort of self-actualization of the human that Marx tirelessly presses toward. It is this self-actualization that remains suspended from the man and his pig. The *habitus* of consumerism only makes possible the free production of thought, perception and action inherent to the particular conditions of its own production and none others.²⁶ A man with one pig is forced to domesticate it as a pet, or at best slaughter it himself for his own consumption. If he is to sustain himself through the consumer market he must manufacture his pig in bulk, contract with the grocer to purchase his bacon and ham only as packaged goods for resale, but not his whole pig, and certainly not with the establishment of a relationship apart from contractual obligation, which renders any return specified *in* time and space lest the reified relation be severed.

II

²⁵ Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 31.

²⁶ Bourdieu, 55.

The conditions for a convivial retooling of society would require a distinctly different articulation and practice of time and space. Convivially construed, time is the *how* of the human's inhabiting of space, space being the parameters within which this *how* is conditioned. Such a social space is what makes free actions possible, while at the same time excluding other forms of activity, especially those that distort human relationality.²⁷ Time and space are hereby bound up together with human action as speech-acts that extend the range of human freedoms rather than limit, insofar as freedoms for the actions are socially constitutive and constituting, which will also construct and reconstruct certain spaces to this end. The key is the manner of relating that must exist between the subject and his or her space and time, which proffers norms and customs of interdependency and mutual permeation of those within this socially conditioned space.

Crucial here is the realization that the subject will relate to his or her environment on the basis of some socially conditioned time and space, and will do so by inhabiting both according to a particular *habitus*. This *habitus*, conditioned by the given parameters, will naturally breed conflict if the practices and forms of engagement do not free the subject to make his or her way in the world through creative and relational participation, i.e. actively. In other words, one can deceive the mind much more readily than one can deceive the body. As convincing as *productivity* may be to the 'rational mind' the body *knows* that something is lacking in its sense of *eudaimonia*. It comes as no surprise that Aristotle saw no way for slaves to achieve any real sense of human flourishing. Their bodies do not offer these sorts of freedoms to the intellect. Their socially constructed reality bears not just their body in slavery, but the whole body-mind synthesis that is the human. Likewise, the consumer market no less enslaves the mind through its conditioning of the body. One *has* time, *accrues* time, *buys* and *saves* time, which is articulable only because the body is measured *in* time for its resale at hourly rates.²⁸

²⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 71-75.

²⁸ Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*, 30-32.

The systems of disposition—*habitus*²⁹, Illich's *tools of conviviality*, are those social mechanisms that construe the human imaginary. This imaginary does not come through a system of ideas; rather, it rises or is made-manifest to each person proportionate to their participation in the particular *habitus* of a given social order. Human creativity, i.e. arts and cultural norms that circumscribe them, are something of a portal through which one can enter to better understand how the body-mind is being socially conditioned and habituated. The artist always says more than she knows she is saying and never knows the full extent of what her words, painting, sculpture, etc., mean, not to mention what they will mean in another age. Cubism is an interesting example of how artwork makes manifest the *social imaginary* inscribed in the "structuring structures" of society. Modernity's move to particularity, specialization, and autonomous isolation is readily visible in Picasso's paintings in the early nineteenth hundreds. Cubism of the early twentieth century reveals the decentralized, fragmentary existence of the modern subject. The human is not a whole but a series of particulars that need not cohere as a whole, or rather, cannot through the social conditionings and *habitus* of modernity's global village exist holistically. The painting in modernity, as a kind of socially constructed space exists without a past or future referent. Each aspect is a series of lines or points that do not come together or permeate the other. Space now exists without past or future and time is become a spatial context that measures and construes human activity in the same fashion that constructed or social space—architecture and works of art—once did.

Further, the artist inhabits the space of the canvas with her *habitus-comported* body. In the case of Cubism, the canvas is inhabited by Picasso's fragmented body, revealing his own implicit assumptions about the "essence" of the world.³⁰ The body is carried along in the artist's creations such that one's existence is taken up and made-manifest in what is created by human action.³¹ The artist cannot help but reveal, even to herself, the social

²⁹ Bourdieu, 59.

³⁰ Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005), 45.

³¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 192; Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 45.

comportment of her body. Art, as a human creative act, by always carrying in it the social forces at work on the artist has a way of seeing more than the artist herself can see apart from her art. Art is the *product* of a particular gaze.³² Just as the artist's work of art comes out of a particular "gaze," a particular comportment of the body whereby one inhabits the social space, likewise does the viewer "gaze" upon the work of art by a similar, if not identical, bodily comportment. Within this socially constructed space, the artist, by making manifest her own socially construed gaze and *habitus*, reveals also to the viewer the manner of her own social conditioning and *habitus*. In this sense, the artist carries more than herself along with her in her art; she carries all the social forces at work on her body. The artist is never alone in her art, therefore, but is perhaps the exemplary social being by manifesting the socially construed identity she is, even if this identity is fictionalized as autonomous.

Such material forces at work on the body remain largely unconscious to the subject. As the artist reveals more than she knows, more than she is consciously aware, likewise does each person's activities manifest their identity through the particularities of one's bodily comportment. The *habitus* of the social body, however, reinforces the validity of the social conditioning, in the same way that the use of a credit card reinforces the fragmentary nature of the capitalist system. Each movement within the framework of a society creates a further watershed for the intellect that lends the body more and more to the construal of one's social conditioning. Art in modernity reveals the inversion of the human as a producer of products, or better, the creator of art to a produced product proportionate to her proximity and participation in the *habitus* of the market. Without the artist, however, this bodily comportment is suspended from the intellect, which is perhaps why art remains largely hidden from those who are not the "engineers" or the masters of society.

Returning briefly to the understanding of the gaze noted above, there is a mimetic draw exacted from the individual by a given society, as each society, for good or ill, habituates the human to act and respond in certain ways to its social conditionings. The gaze is best understood as inhabiting that

³² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 77.

upon which it is cast, which means that she who gazes, the mimetic act of gazing, the whole of one's "background," and the object upon which one's gaze is cast are all inseparable, though not conflated into either. In other words, to cast one's gaze is to cast one's world upon the object of gaze, such that the social-body of the individual permeates the social-body of the object. This gaze is operative regardless of the intellectual negation of the human as a pure rational subject proffered by modernity. The problematic as this relates to time and space in their social constitution is that their commodification has restructured the human experience as existing within a vacuum. This disenfranchisement of the body inverts the time-space relation. It is the temporalization of space and the spatialization of time.³³ Space now exists without a past or future and time has become the spatial context that measures and construes human activity in the same way that constructed space (social space)—architecture—was once the liberating or confining of time. Time is no longer linked to human action and space no longer the permeable "stuff" that is continually reconstituted by human activity. The ironic implications of the chasm created between time and space conflates each into the other, which simultaneously negates any reciprocal relation between human action with either space or time. The very use of machine-made materials, argues Juhani Pallasmaa, inhibits the porous relation that once existed between the human and her architectural environment.³⁴ The modern skyscraper towers over the subject as a timeless and seemingly spaceless entity, which bears down upon the individual his or her own mortality that can have no relation to the towering eternity. Such architecture refuses the human an entry into its timelessness, making her incapable of a participation in that which lies beyond herself. She is stuck in the ageless presence of windowless glass, always aware of the threat of her demise, not as one who exists beyond herself *with* a pliable structure of natural materials.

The separability of space and time from human action accordingly distances each human from the other, making each person incapable of a relation apart from disinterested love. All relations are unilateral. "I" relate to

³³ Pallasmaa, 21.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

"you" and "you" to "me" but there is no relation of "we." This is the notion of the sovereign individual. The African mantra that, "I am because we are," is an affront to imperialist ideology. Love in a convivial society must be intensely interested, in the specific sense of proliferating reciprocity. Just as the non-porous imposition of modern architecture (space) and economics (time) upon the human subject proffers an abstract or disinterested, non-reciprocal relation to the other, likewise is the coherence of human action to time and space necessary for reciprocity *with* and interested love *for* the other. It will involve an intensely material and holistic engagement with time and space by the human in ways that enable her to inhabit time and space as convivial tools that extend her liberties and relations with others within and outside her social body.

III

What is involved in the reconstruction of time and space as inhabitable first entails a recognition of the failure of abstract time and space to make possible any sense of *eudaimonia*. Industrialism, built on the hypothesis that machines can replace slavery, believed that machines could "work" for people.³⁵ The tools of industry do not make the most of human energy and imagination, but rather create well-programmed energy slaves who can imagine no other form of energy use.³⁶ Rather than eliminating slavery the tools of industrialism enslave its users and reconstitute those within the society of production as mere consumers. Within such a society, those who enjoy a sense of fulfillment do so largely at the expense of others. Competition becomes the only means of human flourishing.

Tools are hereby to be understood more broadly than simple hardware or machines. The key insight by Illich is to show in like manner as above how institutions, be they factories that produce tangible commodities or systems of intangible commodities, are themselves tools.³⁷ Whether an institution produces crackers or software, curriculum or laws, it remains a device that

³⁵ Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*, 10.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

shapes and constitutes a given social order. The tools of society are inescapable; they are intrinsic to social relations, as individuals relate to others through their mastery of tools or by their manner of being acted upon passively.³⁸ To the degree of each will determine the extent to which a person understands who they are as “meaning-makers” or mere consumers. In other words, the self-illumination is limited or expanded by the tools of a social body. Human creativity or enslavement is decidedly systemic, which is to say that individual freedom is capable only through institutional relations constituted by interdependent relations within the institution, making possible analogous interdependency between institutions. Competition, therefore, cannot be hailed as a virtue, as it is in industrial and capitalist societies.³⁹ Individual freedom and creative energy is available and made possible only through institutional mediums that constitute and reconstitute the human as free, creative, and (inter)dependent, rather than as an autonomous consumer of market goods.

Integral to such a recognition to how tools “work on us” in modern society is the realization that a tool, be it a machine or institution, is inseparable from that which it produces. Every tool used by or acted upon an individual or society construes what a person or body of people perceives to be real. There is no abstract meaning or objectivity; all is conditioned and conditioning, shaping the human imaginary to relate to all things as illumined by the tools of engagement. Tools cannot simply be used differently to give them a new meaning, although this does help. Rather, the very design of the tool must be transformed to suit its new function in order to reconstitute the imagination no longer to see the tool as its former self. The sword cannot simply be stuck in the ground to make it a plowshare. It must be beaten out into a new shape (Isaiah 2.4), reconstituting both its function and design, ensuring the sustainability of its new function. It is crucial to convivial

³⁸ Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*, 21.

³⁹ Some exception should be made for games and play; however, it is easily noticeable how sport, especially televised sport, in modern society is a tool for the proliferation of competition in every arena of life—to treat everything as a “game” and not as human community. As exceptions, however, they can be understood as retreats from the normal order to interdependency and hierarchy necessary for human flourishing, to promote a healthy suspension akin to “the feast of fools.” See Harvey Gallagher. Cox, *The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

reconstruction that the medium (tool) and the mediated and those from whom and to whom a thing or information is mediated are understood as differentiated parts of an inseparable whole of interdependent relations.⁴⁰

Something that may help bring this retooling into greater light is the story, perhaps legend, of missionaries who went to Papua New Guinea to convert the natives. The greatest difficulty faced by the missionaries was the practice of headhunting common to the natives, for which they used stone axes. The stone axes were also used by the people of New Guinea to dig up tubers. The missionaries saw the stone axe as a point of entry to evangelize the people of New Guinea. They sought to make a connection with the natives by finding a way to help them with their farming while also deterring them from chopping off heads. In order to do so, the missionaries introduced steel axes to the natives that would replace their stone axes. The natives were grateful for the new axes, which made gathering tubers much easier; however, they also realized the many benefits of the new metal axes for headhunting. The retooling attempt by the missionaries failed because they only updated a preexistent tool but did not replace it with another. Having learned their lesson, the missionaries made a second attempt at reform. This time they exchanged the metal axes for machetes. The machete still served the purpose of agricultural needs but was also distinctly different in size and shape from the stone and metal axes that the natives did not relate it to headhunting.

The convivial reconstruction of tools that will relate humans to humans as humans, will necessarily involve a complete transformation of the tool, which will entail that the tool no longer resemble the former medium of “headhunting,” but will make available a stronger sense of interdependency and *eudaimonia*. A simple updating of a tool will not bring about an alternative use, nor will the use of a tool remove its history of former uses; rather, it must entail an entire restructuring of the form (structure) itself. It is also important to realize that there is no “magic machete.” That is, there is no miracle tool that will simply cause interdependency or bring about a just society.⁴¹ Convivial reconstruction will result only from a new relationship

⁴⁰ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 7-21.

⁴¹ Illich, *Tools For Conviviality*, 66.

between individuals and their tools. This means that *everything* must be understood in its relation to the common, which has everything to do with the intricate bounded union between persons and their tools as extensions of themselves to others.

A helpful paradigm is that of Ferdinand Tönnies, as outlined in “Community and Society.” Tönnies contrasts *gemeinschaft* (community) with *gesellschaft* (society) in a similar manner that Illich does with convivial and non-convivial. In a *gemeinschaft*, what is taken for granted is the relationship itself.⁴² Relating to others, along with all resulting associations among family members or groups, is taken as normative, an organic aspect of human nature. In the *gesellschaft*, however, any and all relations are fictional and temporary, externally imposed by social mechanisms of particular durations.⁴³

Gemeinschaft bears the mark of interdependency among those of the community; individuals are mutually permeating, naturally linked together through complex bonds of kith and kin. This mutually permeating relation extends beyond the range of a local community, but only as an extension of the community. An ancient example of this is found in Homer’s Iliad, with the encounter between Diomedes and Glaucus. The two warriors meet on the road and prepare to battle one another. However, before engaging in combat, Diomedes asks Glaucus who he is. Glaucus is confused but answers him with a full lineage of his family heritage. After Glaucus’ account of his family line, Diomedes realizes that Glaucus’ grandfather was none other than Bellerophon, a friend of Diomedes’ grandfather Oeneus. Diomedes then changes his posture and lowers his voice from his previous war cry and speaks gently to Glaucus:

Verily now art thou a friend of my father’s house from of old:
for goodly Oeneus on a time entertained peerless Bellerophon
in his halls, and kept him twenty days; and moreover they gave
one to the other fair gifts of friendship. Oeneus gave a belt
bright with scarlet, and Bellerophon a double cup of gold which
I left in my palace as I came hither... So let us shun one

⁴² Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), 33.

⁴³ Ibid.

another's spears even amid the throng; full many there be for me to slay... And let us make exchange of amour, each with the other, that these men too may know that we declare ourselves to be friends from our fathers' days.⁴⁴

This is the same manner of the relational extension described as *gemeinschaft* by Tönnies. The relation between Diomedes and Glaucus, which at first appears to be “unnatural,” is actually an extension of the organic nature of friendship within a community, and when one member of the community becomes friends with another he or she brings together the whole of his or her community in the relation, and likewise with the other party involved. It is a real and organic relation because the individual relation is conceived within the totality of relations and associations of the community as a whole.⁴⁵

Such an understanding of human relations and friendship must be understood in light of the habits and dispositions of a community. The *gemeinschaft* is a form of relating that conditions and constitutes a direct interestedness for each person as an extension of one's own life, and proportionate to this actualization is the extent to which any social body can properly be called a *gemeinschaft*.⁴⁶ Further, the greater one's participation in the *habitus* of the common will be the greater likelihood for *sensus communis*, for each person will be shaped and formed—disposed—to *perceive* all things as *gemeinschaft* or its extension, giving way to organic, even accidental, interdependency. Inseparable for the *gemeinschaft* is consensus and concord—understanding and action.⁴⁷ The totality of the *gemeinschaft*, in its particular form of life, provides the necessary hermeneutic for knowing all things in a contingent relation through the mediating tools of the community. All relations to people, places, and things are understood in, by and through the *gemeinschaft* and as inseparable from it. The social body and its forms of relating—tools, are inseparable. Institutions within the social body serve

⁴⁴ Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Augustus Taber Murray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 277-279.

⁴⁵ Tönnies, *Community and Society*, 35.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

either as tools that proliferate the overarching social structure or give way to an alternative community within the wider social body.

There is a vast gulf between the form of human relations within a *gemeinschaft* and a *gesellschaft*. Primary for Tönnies is that the *gemeinschaft* is a living body that is not a mere aggregation of parts, but an interdependent totality of mutual intent.⁴⁸ It begins from the premise of perfect unity of wills as a natural condition, preserved even in the midst of actual separation.⁴⁹ Tönnies sees this natural condition as basic to the human condition who has a definite physical body, linked together through this body, whether by blood relations or marital relations, and the relations forged between communities by such bonds. The degree of natural affiliation has largely to do with proximity, both in terms of the relational bond and geography. Following, everything that conforms to this natural condition is understood to be of a single will, mutually bound together as *gemeinschaft* not by choosing or willing to be so but by realizing the relations as a natural consequence of various bonds of unity that accords with the reality of what it means to be human.⁵⁰ What is inseparable from the *gemeinschaft* is any understanding of thought, word, and deed from that which is the *gemeinschaft* itself. That is, the *gemeinschaft* is the persons of the social body and all the tools and structures that form such interdependent relations. To the extent of interdependency among those within the social body is the extent to which it can be properly called a *gemeinschaft*—the more each relation functions as a familial blood relation.

Whereas in the *gemeinschaft* all people remain essentially united in spite of various separating factors, in a *gesellschaft* all people are essentially separated, despite any unitive factors.⁵¹ All actions are, therefore, separated from the whole as isolated acts of autonomous individuals.⁵² Each person and their actions bear no essential relation to the whole, which renders all tools not as relation creating or sustaining means, but likewise isolated and isolating extensions human action that sustain, rather than alleviate, division. There is

⁴⁸ Tönnies, 36.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 47.

⁵¹ Ibid., 65.

⁵² Ibid.

no common value in a *gesellschaft*; it is the Cartesian city of the subject, whereby what exists does so only in relation to the *Cogito*. In a *gesellschaft* there is no common good; there is no common at all. All is exclusive to the individual subject as autonomous.⁵³ All relations within the *gesellschaft*, therefore, are as means to individual ends. A person does not relate to other persons or tools within the structure with a common telos; rather, “I” have “my” end; “you” have “your” end; “we” do not share this end, except as a common ideal achieved in isolation from each’s attainment of it.

Nevertheless, as Tönnies shows, even within the *gesellschaft* is the unavoidable natural relatedness of each person. People within the *gesellschaft* cannot escape their human nature, and the *gesellschaft* assumes that the human is a relational being but attempts only to sustain this relation through the fictional structure of the contract. Implicit, however, to the contractual system is a “social will.”⁵⁴ The distinction is teleological. The contractual relation assumes a point of termination, whereas in the *gemeinschaft* the relation is interminable. The bond is not between two abstract wills but between organs of the same body. This understanding of contractual relation runs in direct opposition to human community. Value within the *gesellschaft* is contingent upon a singular fact: that the object in question is possessed by one at the exclusion of another and that the object is desired by another, not as a common good, but as an exclusive object of desire.⁵⁵ The *gesellschaft*, in other words, creates a fictional, social bond that atomizes each individual, such that each person relates to the other, not as people conditioned by the customs and norms of reciprocity, which is the implicit nature of the *gemeinschaft*, but rather only relate in the momentary exchange of goods that establish and sunder the relationship in the exchange of goods or following periods of contractual obligation. There is only a conglomeration of atomized persons in the *gesellschaft*, but there is no inherent or implicit relation beyond the establishment and limits of specified returns and contractual obligation.⁵⁶

⁵³ Tönnies, 65.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 66.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 68.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 67-69.

What is shown in Tönnies account of the *gesellschaft* is a particular construal of desire that bears no communal intent. That is, desire is a unilateral movement of individual will, blinding oneself to all relations involved in what is desired. The object of desire is objectified, abstracted from all implicit social relations involved in its creating or any bonds created by its attainment. All in the *gesellschaft* is consumable and non-binding. The *gesellschaft* is a non-inhabitable space and abstract time within which unilateral relations are transacted, just as seen in Illich's description of industrial capitalism. Clearly expressed in both Illich and Tönnies is an account of human relations that are sustained by particular tools that mediate each one to another as inseparable from those they mediate. The nature of the relationship is determined largely by the nature of the tool. For the sustaining of a *gemeinschaft* or convivial society, where the relationships between those within are taken as a priori, the tools or mediums of relating, be they institutional or otherwise, must be designed such that the a priori relation is reinforced and constituted in the very architecture of the tool itself, not simply used to that end. It is important to remember that tools are inextricable from the community or society that produces them. All tools develop out of the structuring structures of any social body.⁵⁷ If these structures are not designed for the good of the common, but for the good of a select few of the social body for mastering others, tools created in compliance with this dominating structure will only invert the relation of its users to the ends of the freedom-limiting structure—*gesellschaft*, which will only serve to enslave the human to those tools, be they institutional, mechanical or electronic.⁵⁸

Neither Illich nor Tönnies would claim that there will ever be an ideological city on a hill where *gemeinschaft* is exemplified absolutely. This is not the point at all. Rather, each shows the importance and absolute necessity of understanding human relations as mutually contingent and sustained by the various systems of relations within the body polis, which requires an ongoing interrogation of these systemic relations in light of an implicit relation of interdependency. This will involve first and foremost the

⁵⁷ McLuhan, 142.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 139.

recognition that tools are relational extensions of the human that forge particular bonds that either assume or reject the a priori nature of the community as a body of living organs, mutually dependent and responsible for the body as a whole. The inseparability of signs and symbols (tools), action, and individuals from the social body itself cannot be stressed enough. This is so as much in the *gesellschaft* as in the *gemeinschaft*, even though the nature of tools and action are distinctly different and give way to divergent relations. In the *gemeinschaft* the tools, actions and each person *is* the social body, where time and space are inhabited. For the *gesellschaft*, time and space are abstract; therefore, tools, actions and people exist within its totality but do not inhabit it in any way; all is rendered autonomous to varying degrees. Essence and existence in the *gemeinschaft* are differentiated aspects of a single whole, whereas in the *gesellschaft* the two bear no necessary relation—act and being are ontologically separable.

This distancing of essence and existence (being and action) has a long history in the liturgical practice of the church. In his “Corpus Mysticum,” Henri de Lubac illustrates this in terms of how the Eucharist is understood and articulated throughout the church’s history. The *corpus mysticum* once entailed an indivisible whole of what would later be divided: historical body, sacramental body and ecclesial body. Throughout the early church, the reality of the Eucharistic mystery is the reality of the church.⁵⁹ The body and blood of the risen Christ, the bread and wine of the Eucharist, the liturgical mystery of God made man, and the liturgical acts of the gathered body are all inseparable parts of a differentiated, assimilated whole of the Son’s sacrificial offering to the Father. There is no essential difference between Christ and his body the church, made real by his real presence in the Eucharist.⁶⁰ This union necessitates that the idea of the church and that of the Eucharist be mutually supporting and manifest the truth of each other.⁶¹ Even if the existential reality of the ecclesial body appears to negate the reality of Christ present in, by, and through the Eucharist, it must be understood to be bringing this eschatological reality into the present, not as a perfect unity but as a perfecting

⁵⁹ Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 251.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 260.

unity. That is, there can be no articulation of a “visible” and “invisible” reality of the church, one imperfect here on earth and another perfect in the heavenly realm—except in the sense of that the invisible is eternally becoming visible in the present life of the church that is inseparable from its eschatological reality. Accordingly, the church is always *becoming* the church; it is always being-assimilated to the offering of the Son to the Father, who is eternally being given and received through the proceeding of the Spirit. Any articulation of the church, then, must assume this natural union recapitulated in Christ, in spite of any visible divisions.

This can only be understood ontologically as all things in their preexistent relation to the Eternal Logos, the natural nature of the human as developed by Maximus Confessor. The liturgical practice of the church, therefore, must show forth this natural nature, not in its dividing of sacred from profane, but in its assimilating of the divine and human natures in, by, and through its liturgical tools and actions, materially manifesting its eschatological realization in Christ, historically, sacramentally, and ecclesiologically.

IV

Understanding tools as intrinsic to human relations helps to unmask the apparent naïveté of those who might think of tools, institutions, or economic *norms* as morally neutral or as mere communicative means to separable ends. Again, tools are not abstract from the social body within which they are created and used or create and use. They are extensions of the human, as Marshall McLuhan rightly discloses.⁶² Tools relationally extend—mediate—persons to particular ends, which intend a particular relation to others within the social body. Throughout the whole of church history this relational tool that mediates the body is none other than the Eucharist; however, it is the Eucharist, not as a substance mediated from one subject to another, but the Eucharist (sacrament) as that which it mediates and creates (ecclesia) as an extension of its mediator (Christ). To the degree that this form of mediation is existentially manifest is the degree to which the ecclesia can be properly

⁶² McLuhan, 7-21, 41-47.

called the body of Christ. Nevertheless, this is not to separate the invisible from the visible because of an imperfect actualization of ecclesial form; rather, it is to suggest, following Illich, Tönnies, and de Lubac with them, that the invisible and visible, action and being, eschatological and temporal are inseparable differentiations that disclose the unfolding nature of the church, whose telos is deification—the eternal event of God’s creating and assimilating nature to grace.

To say, then, that Christ is the Liturgy is to say that the Church is Liturgy. Neither of these statements should sound new or surprising; however, each have been ontologically separated in various ways. Act and being (Christ and Liturgy) are separated by Duns Scotus in the thirteenth century, which is the result, as I will later argue, of the separation of the Eucharistic presence from the liturgical action, giving way to an understanding of the church, not as an existential participation in its eschatological realization, but as the space within which a “contractual” moment of Christ’s presence simultaneously begins and ends. This contractual moment of divine presence construes the relational bond between God and the human, and therefore between all within the ecclesial body, not as naturally contingent upon God who is *actus purus*, but as a movement beyond nature toward an unnatural relation of sovereign wills—covenant. God and the human relate to one another within the abstract space of Being (*gesellschaft*) but neither are contingent upon the other, which likewise renders all other relations as contractual exchanges among sovereign wills. Knowledge of this contingent reality of human nature and human identity in its contingent relation to God is available only by a liturgical “tooling” that inebriates the senses in such a way that draws the human beyond her own temporal construal of life and meaning. This intoxication is a movement beyond text and ritual habit; it is a permeation of the human as *homo liturgicus*, a mutually permeating actor who becomes text and ritual in the act of liturgy. The liturgy itself is a sort of dramatic event, an epistemological formation of its participants that is always a movement beyond phenomenology. That is, as a participation in the liturgy Christ *is*, the epistemological manifesting is always simultaneously an

ontological mediation of the body of Christ, neither capable of being rendered abstract from the other.

The meaning of liturgy is imbibed by the participant through the tools and movements that constitute the liturgical action. It is what is made both by the actions of liturgy and the tools of mediating the relation between God and the human, and therefore between all within the ecclesia. What is made, therefore, is inseparable from these tools and actions, which is intended to make the church.⁶³ *What* the church is is inseparable from its *action* and what is *made* by its action—the church is in the *making*. Christ, however, is the sole actor in the church.⁶⁴ The liturgy of the church, therefore, participates in the singular Liturgy of God—Christ, who is the unconfused assimilating of human nature to divinity, gathering humanity into triune reciprocity. Therefore, the liturgy of the church must be a mimetic manifesting of its embodied nature as divine-human permeation and assimilation in Christ. In other words, the Liturgy is a Person, whose name is Jesus. The mimetic movements of the church makes Christ—(re)creates divine-human permeation and reciprocity, not in-itself but through participation, by the Spirit, in the Liturgy of God who incarnates *himself* in the material *for the life of the world*.

There are a variety of ways the church has made this mimetic relation available, but throughout its history the *mysteries*, especially the Eucharist, stand apart as exceptional. The sacraments are the primary tools by which Christ makes available volitive participation in his assimilating of human nature to the divine nature. To say that the sacrament is a tool is at once to say that it is a vessel of the Holy and an extension of the Holy. It carries with it the grace of God's creative and redeeming act, but it is much more than a material vessel for the immaterial grace of God. By extending the grace of God, the sacraments extend or manifest God. This understanding of extension is very much in line with Maximus' understanding of the *logoi* mentioned earlier, as well as that development by Ivan Illich shown above. Again, it is not the mediation of a substance from God to humanity, except in the sense that the Eucharist is the self-mediation of Christ—it is that which it mediates;

⁶³ Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 88.

⁶⁴ Louis Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 146.

the sacramental tool is to be understood as a relational extension of God that manifests the radical assimilation of the divine-human natures in Christ, which comports the body-soul to perceive Christ within the human subject as image and by likeness of virtue, made possible by the church's *habitus*, to gaze upon all things as they exist within God.⁶⁵ The *logoi* or principle of each created essence is its normative or natural existence as a measure of the eternal Logos.⁶⁶ It is what Maximus refers to as its "natural nature," its originally intended function as a manifesting agent of God.⁶⁷ This, however, has been hidden or covered over by sin, such that one is only capable of seeing an entity's true function or nature in proportion to one's volitive participation in the sacramental life of holy church.

Some are wont to say that the sacrament is an "intensification" of the presence of God at work in the world, yet this intensification has more to do with the communicative reality of the material than the material as a vehicle of intensifying God. The material elements of water, bread, wine, oil, hands, and so forth are tools that find their telos in the liturgical movement of God toward the world and the church toward God, each extending one to the other. These tools receive their true purpose by being incorporated into the liturgical action, and by each tool and its function in liturgy does the human become aware of each material's natural nature as an extension of God that manifests his truth and life. The transubstantiation that occurs is a change in nature by a change in function. But the change in nature is a return to each material's natural nature—*logos*. Remember, as it is with the early fathers of the church, when Jesus descends into the Jordan it is not the sinless One who is baptized; rather, Christ's baptism is the baptism of the whole world. Yes, Jesus *is* baptized; however, as in the Gospel account the pivotal moment of Jesus' baptism is *who* is made-manifest. Christ's presence is *intensified* in the river Jordan by the descent of the Spirit and the speaking of the Father. The intensity, however, is the manifestation of Christ's assimilating the world to himself in baptism and by the Spirit returning the world back to the Father as a holy

⁶⁵ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 1084B-C.

⁶⁶ This is very similar to Tönnies theory of the *gemeinschaft* explored above. What is taken for granted is the natural contingent relation of the human upon God, not as a covenantal or contractual relation, but an essential portion of divine Being.

⁶⁷ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 1084D.

offering *with* the Son. The true function of water is made-manifest in the baptism of Christ, which is continually made-manifest in each baptism of the church. The child who is baptized does not become something she was not before baptism; rather, she becomes what she already is *in* Christ. Likewise, the Eucharistic bread becomes more than the bread on a bourgeois dinner table, not because it becomes something *other* than bread but because the function of each loaf is transformed. The intensity, then, is not a matter of a "substantial" change in the elements; rather, the intensity is located in the bread's functional becoming what it always was—the fullness of God's life that gathers humanity into the assimilating act of God in Christ through the everyday sustenance of God's creative goodness.⁶⁸ The material bread and wine, gathered into triune reciprocity through the liturgical action, is given a new name and purpose; it is now body and blood that deifies body and soul. This articulation of function and substance is not to deny the ontological transformation of the bread and wine where, following Aquinas, the Eucharist does not simply communicate something by its application but is what it communicates—"namely, Christ's own body."⁶⁹ What this functional orienting is meant to emphasize is the refusal of any binary between the substance of God and the action of God. As seen above with Maximus, the accomplishment of the mystery of God's embodiment alters the condition of the human by Christ's self-mediation in the bread, which thereby transforms the substance of (we might even say substantiates) what it is to be human. This Eucharistic action, inseparable from the Eucharistic materials, is the incarnate reality⁷⁰ that "elevates man to God through his love for God and brings God down to man because of his love for man."⁷¹

This account of the Eucharistic table, which is not the exact concern of Ferdinand Tönnies, nevertheless bears an intimate likeness to the table within

⁶⁸ See also Pickstock, especially 190-192.

⁶⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIIa.73.1.

⁷⁰ I use the word "reality" in the same manner as Aquinas does in the *Summa Theologiae* (IIIa.73.1), where *res* is *in ipsa materia*—it is in the sacrament. Whereas the other sacraments are an "application" of a spiritual reality, the Eucharist *is* the spiritual reality. The Eucharist is consistently understood, therefore, as the sacrament that perfects all other sacraments. As the *self-mediation* of Christ's resurrected body, the Eucharist is that which gathers the human into her true *function-oriented substance*.

⁷¹ Maximus, *Ambiguum* 7, 1084D.

the *gemeinschaft*. The life of mutual possession and enjoyment is exemplified by the dinner table, for the table is the house itself in the *gemeinschaft*, the two are inseparable. The economy of the house within a *gemeinschaft* is manifest by the return of its members, after their daily separation and dispersment in labor, to the table for sharing the very fruits of the labor of each.⁷² Within the *gemeinschaft*, as it is to be within the *corpus mysticum*, all forms of relating are constituted and understood by how each person is conditioned by the *habitus* of the Table.

This is no doubt the case in the early church. The food and drink of the Lord's Table is that which gathers the community in the bond of Christ. The Eucharistic bread and wine are the food and drink of the eschatological community, for the bread and wine on which they dine is Christ.⁷³ Ingesting Christ is to participate in Christ's assimilating human nature to divinity, which is to be gathered into the body of Christ, even consumed by God. Ambrose makes the bold claim that the human becomes the dinner table of God.

Christ dines on such food in us, He drinks such drink in us;
with the intoxication of this drink, He challenges us to make a
departure from worse things to those that are better and best.⁷⁴

The Eucharistic participant feasts and is feasted upon; she consumes and is consumed; she approaches the table of the Lord and becomes God's dinner table. Participating in Eucharist is to become Eucharist—to become Christ through volitive participation in the eternal act of the Son's assimilating human nature to himself, being gathered into the reciprocal life of Holy Trinity.

The theological description of what takes place when the Christian participates in the Eucharistic celebration is of little dispute in the early church. What is not always clear is how one participates in the celebration. The basic structure is mostly agreed upon, although the extent of participation by non-clerics is not always clear. This is not altogether important for this particular investigation, as the particular movements of and materials for

⁷² Tönnies, 50-55.

⁷³ *The Canons of the Council of Trullo*, Canon CI (NPNF).

⁷⁴ Ambrose, "Isaac, or the Soul," 5.49, in *Seven Exegetical Works*, trans. Michael P. McHugh, vol. 65, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2003).

Eucharistic celebration that are of concern here are largely evidenced if not clearly articulated. What is of concern in this section as it relates to the Eucharist itself, is how the lay person participated in the offertory, the preparation of bread and wine, the reception of Eucharist, and the pietistic development that increasingly surrounded the consecrated bread and wine.

As shown in chapter one, making offering has a lengthy history in Judaism that is in many ways handed down to the church. In Romans 12, Paul offers a commentary on the Jewish oblation, the solemn procession with gifts toward the table, taking up the Greek *prosphora*—"to bring forward"—to invoke the offertory procession of gifts by Christians as their self-sacrifice—their imitation of Christ's own immolation.⁷⁵ The offertory procession of the church included the whole of the faithful gathered for liturgy, which was identified with Christ's death. By bringing forward the bread and wine to be used in the Eucharistic celebration, the Christian brings herself forward *with* Christ as his—Christ's—offering to the Father. The bread is the liturgical tool that relationally extends the human toward God. She is her bread; she is on the table. Keeping with Paul's articulation of "living sacrifice" in Romans 12, the prayer in the liturgy of the Syrian Jacobites exemplifies this relation.

...who offered to his father an acceptable offering for the
expiation and redemption of the whole world: vouchsafe us, to
offer ourselves to thee a living sacrifice... and like unto thy
sacrifice which was for us, O Christ our Lord, forever.
Amen.⁷⁶

What the liturgical procession and the oblation of bread make available to the early Christian is a means of participating in the self-emptying of God on the cross without undergoing a martyr's death, which is especially important in a Post-Constantinian world of relative peace for the church. To be a martyr is to "guarantee" participation in the sacrifice of Christ, thereby confirming the promise of one's entrance into the heavenly realm, which many sought to do during various times of persecution throughout the Empire, often leading to their denial of Christ for fear of the same persecution. This is frequent enough

⁷⁵ Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, 91-94.

⁷⁶ Cited in *Von Simson*, 93.

that instructions are given not to seek martyrdom, for fear that one would end up rejecting Christ. Martyrdom is never to be sought ought; martyrdom is a gift. This exemplary witness to the truth of Christ was something that moved well beyond mere human forms of courage and endurance.⁷⁷ Martyrdom is more like a seal of faithfulness.⁷⁸ As an entrance into the faithfulness of Christ, participating in a death like his, the martyr becomes with every fiber of her being—materially and spiritually, truly human, one whose functional identity is an extension of Christ himself—the martyr as the primary evangelical *tool* of God. The individual martyr is not the primary *agent* involved in her martyrdom. Christ alone is operative, as expressed in the martyrology of Felicitas above. Each particular martyrdom is participatory, but is nevertheless *done* by none other save Christ.⁷⁹ To “choose” or to run after martyrdom, is to negate the truth of the embodied witness as Christ’s own action and gift to the martyr, not something that can be sought after or chosen.⁸⁰ Even Christ does not seek out his martyrdom, often hiding or running away, finally reaching the point of time’s fullness where there is only to give himself over to the will of the Father. What is clearly evidenced in the early church’s account of martyrdom is that it is one way to ensure that the faithful is participating in the way of crucifixion, undoubtedly baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection.

Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 69-85.

⁷⁸ Von Simson, 96.

⁷⁹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, V.ii.

⁸⁰ There is always a tension in how the early church articulated martyrdom; however, it is consistently that which is neither to be run toward nor avoided absolutely. It is, as seen below with Paul, that which incorporates the human into the sufferings of Christ for the purpose of bearing witness to Christ. It is very much to be understood as a gift from God that incorporates the human, by her receiving of it, into the offering of the Son to the Father.

⁸¹ Romans 6.4-5

Even though Paul is articulating baptism as the Christian's union with Christ's death and resurrection, it is abundantly clear that the mimetic relation of baptism with death, which is clearly picked up in the early church and carried on to current day, is materially connected with Paul's physical witness of bearing in his flesh the sufferings of Christ. Paul sees suffering as both a gift from Christ to the faithful and the participatory means that gives the faithful to Christ, for the attainment of salvation.

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.⁸²

It is not the concern of this work to argue justification issues, although Paul is abundantly clear that it is a participation in the singular redemptive act of God in Christ that saves. What is key for the purposes here is to show how one's participation in a bodily witness to the death and resurrection of Christ is key for the early church's understanding of human awareness as one assimilated to Christ's redeeming offering to the Father.

To be a martyr is to be one of the faithful who abandon all for the sake of Christ, "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead." With Constantine in the early fourth century, however, Christians begin to enjoy relative peace throughout the Empire, which alters greatly how the Christian would come to understand her life as a witness (martyr) to the faithfulness of Christ. A new form of witness becomes necessary, what becomes known as "white martyrdom," which is directly associated with the monastic life. This is clearly evidenced in "The Rule of Saint Benedict," where Saint Benedict links the life of the monastic with Paul's own words from his letter to the Philippians.

⁸² Philippians 3.10-14.

But as we progress in this way of life and faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments,... faithfully observing his teaching in the monastery until death, we shall through patience share in the sufferings of Christ that we may deserve also to share in his kingdom.⁸³

Not everyone had the luxury or ability to live in seclusion from the world. Another means of laying down one's life for Christ would be requisite if the Christian was to know her life as one who participates in the *via crucis*. One of the primary ways lay persons are incorporated into a new form of martyrdom is the offertory procession. Just as the martyr lays down her crown by laying down her life, likewise does the offertory participant lay down her life by laying her bread upon the table of the Lord.⁸⁴ This assimilation of the offertory procession to the martyr's procession, each bearing a mimetic relation to Christ's own procession to Golgotha, transfigures the Jewish offertory and procession. The offertory now serves as the entrance into the incarnate life of God, whereby placing one's bread upon the table is to empty oneself to be incarnated by God, becoming the bread of heaven received in liturgy. The offertory procession is the church's becoming in likeness the image of God she is in Christ, becoming like God in Christ's death and resurrection made available through bread and wine. This proceeding is analogical, a symbolic proceeding that incorporates the participant into the fullness of Christ's entering the world. What the offertory and the bread oblation make available to the liturgical participant is the ability to inhabit the space and time of liturgy.

It may at first seem a stretch to make the connection between the martyr's procession and the offertory procession; however, as Von Simson points out, the offertory prayer for the feast of the protomartyr St. Stephen evidences this point well: "Receive O Lord our offerings in commemoration of thy saints: that, as their sufferings rendered them glorious, so our *devotion* may render us innocent."⁸⁵ The key to the ancient use of "devotion." The

⁸³ Benedict, *The Rule of St. Benedict in English*, trans. Timothy Fry (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1981), 49-50.

⁸⁴ Von Simson, 88-110.

⁸⁵ op. cit., Von Simson, 96, *italics mine*.

ancient usage of *devotio* bears the meaning of something like a "death vow."⁸⁶ Aquinas recalls this same usage of *devovere*.

Devotion is derived from devote; wherefore those person are said to be devout who, in a way, devote themselves to God, so as to subject themselves wholly to Him... it follows that devotion prescribes the mode of human acts, whether they be acts of the will itself about things directed to the end or acts of the other powers that are moved by the will.⁸⁷

Aquinas goes on to relate martyrdom to "external" offerings, because the offering and the vow are bound up together with human action. What makes the offering "a sacrifice, properly speaking, requires that something be done to the thing which is offered."⁸⁸ In the case of martyrdom it is the "breaking" of the body, the destruction of the life because of the saint's witness to the truth of Christ. Following this same paradigm, bringing bread to the Eucharistic table in procession is not itself a *sacrifice*; it is an *oblation*, for it has not yet been "broken, eaten, blessed," which would make it a sacrifice.⁸⁹ The sacrificial aspect of one's offering occurs within the liturgical movement of consecration, which is the whole of the liturgy. What is important to make plain is that the oblation of bread is a self-oblation. It is to place oneself upon the table of the Lord, so to become *sacrifice*.

As seen in both Ambrose and Augustine there is an indistinguishableness of the Eucharistic action from the Christian's participation in the offertory procession.⁹⁰ The consecratory rite involving the bread and wine of communion is inseparable from the consecration of the faithful who participate in it. It is a "twofold sacrifice" that one finds in early articulations of Eucharistic theology; God sanctifies the materials of bread and wine *for* and *as* the sanctification of the recipient. The bread and wine become operative in the work of God's reconciling the world to himself in

⁸⁶ Von Simson, 97

⁸⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Q82.1.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, II-II, Q85.3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ See Augustine *Sermon lxxxii.3.5* (*PL*, XXXVIII, 508 f.), and Ambrose *Comment. In I ad Timothy* (*PL*, XVII, 497), cited in Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, 92.

order that the human would become likewise operative. The oblation becomes a sacrifice *with* Christ's own sacrifice. Just as the "tools" of bread and wine are extensions of God—Christ's body and blood, so also does she who feasts on them become extensions of this same Logos, being membered—assimilated—to the Son through an active participation in the oblation, consecration and reception of the transubstantiated bread and wine. To speak of transubstantiation is not to invoke a substance-accident argument, even though such a description is already present in the writings of Ambrose, Augustine and others; rather, it is again to manifest the truth of bread, wine, and all of humanity as icons of the Icon—Christ, tools created for manifesting the grandeur of God. Participating in the offertory procession is an *entering into* divine reciprocity. By her self-oblation, signified by the bread and wine brought forward,⁹¹ the Christian participates in being-assimilated to Jesus' offering of himself to the Father. Being so bound, the Christian is gathered into the Godhead with the Son through her participation in Christ's offering and, in receiving the bread and wine, she receives the very Spirit of God. That is, she receives by the Spirit her sanctified self—her true reality, for she *is received* into Reality—the Logos. As aforesaid, it is the functional transformation of the material bread and wine that the Eucharist communicates or manifests, which intends a functional transformation of human action altogether. Again, what mediates (Eucharist) is what is mediated (Christ), so that the recipient likewise becomes both mediator (Christ) and what is mediated (Eucharist).

The particular expression of Eucharistic participation, especially the inseparability of the offertory from the whole of the Eucharistic rite, is a theology that arises out of the *habitus* of the early church and is formalized in the early medieval liturgies. As Jungmann shows, the liturgical stakes are high in the early church, especially as it relates early on to the uprising of Gnosticism. While the emphasis may have been "spiritual" for the nascent church in the first century, it becomes increasingly "material" by the turn of

⁹¹ It must be remembered that symbol here is not abstract from the thing-symbolized. The bread and wine offering of the Christian is her self-offering. See also Williams, *Eucharistic Sacrifice*.

the third century.⁹² This “material” sense is unnecessary to explicate before the new Gnosticism is faced by Irenaeus and the early church with him. “Spiritual” in the early church does not mean that which is contrary or opposed to the material;⁹³ rather, it is nearly always a return or realization of the truth of materiality. Irenaeus, as already discussed, perhaps better than anyone before or after his time, is able to hold together the true spiritual reality of human nature (image) with that which manifests this very truth—participatory human action (likeness).

The development of the offertory rite that occurs with the development of the liturgy on the whole is significant for its theological articulation to follow. Ambrose and Augustine would not be able to speak of a “two-fold” sacrifice had there not been the general rule of presenting gifts of bread and wine for liturgy, which is normative at least by the time of Cyprian in the mid-third century.⁹⁴ It is not universal how the offerings of bread and wine made it to the table for Eucharist, but it is abundantly clear that the faithful brought gifts of bread and wine for this purpose. It is primarily in the West that bringing offerings up to the table was something done by lay people, something built into the very structure of the liturgy.⁹⁵ This form of participation may not have been universally practiced in the church, though there is at least much evidence for generalizing. What is of greatest concern here is that prior to the papal stational service in seventh century Rome, there is consistently an offering of bread and wine by the people and some form of bringing gifts to the table in procession by the people.⁹⁶ In order to *do* liturgy everyone needed to participate in the offering, regardless of their ability. Cyprian is especially harsh in this regard, especially on those who had much to offer, saying to a rich woman: “*dominicum celebrare te credis... quae in dominicum sine sacrificio venis, quae partem de sacrificio quod pauper obtulit*

⁹² Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum Sollemnia)*, trans. Francis A. Brunner, vol. II (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1955), 3-10.

⁹³ One can certainly claim that Saint Antony and others had some sense of body/soul dichotomy, the body as a prison for the soul; however, this should not be generalized as normative for the church.

⁹⁴ See Augustine *Sermon lxxxii.3.5 (PL, XXXVIII, 508 f.)*, and Ambrose *Comment. In I ad Timothy (PL, XVII, 497)*, cited in Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, 92.

⁹⁵ Jungmann, *The Mass*, vol. II, 3-10.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

sumis.”⁹⁷ Cyprian essentially accuses the rich woman of stealing because she brings nothing to offer and yet receives the Eucharistic gifts. Cyprian is clear that to receive implies having one’s offering assimilated to the offering of Christ, which in turn, after consecration, (re)assimilates one to the body and blood of Christ. The logic inherent to the offering and offertory rite of the early medieval church is an ontology of participation, specifically a participation in the sufferings of Christ, becoming one with him in his singular offering to the Father, *for the life of the world*, through a mimetic procession to the table of God. The connectedness between the human and her bread is essential to the realization of the liturgical participant’s martyrdom by procession. The procession is inseparable from the act of consecration, but it remains at a different stage in the liturgical progression. The bread oblation, however, does not fall from the sky and it is important to remember that the offerings of bread come from the homes of those participating in liturgy.⁹⁸ The people baked the bread that would be used for the Eucharistic feast.

In the ancient and medieval world, as evidenced above in Aquinas, although in a different vein, human action transforms that which is acted upon. What is made by human hands is inseparable from those hands; it is a relational extension of a person, endowed with one’s character. Bread is no less endowed, especially when one considers the human energy used in making bread in a non-electric world. There is also bread that requires an extraordinary commitment by those who prepare it, take for instance Mexican *mole*, which contains 33 ingredients and takes approximately 12 hours to make.⁹⁹ The exercise of human energy upon materials transforms the everyday into something *more*. This *more* is human. It comes to bear the spirit or energy of its creator, as she who creates always leaves a residue of herself in that which is created. It is the human act of baking bread that endows the bread with the spirit of the baker. As noted above in the case of works of art as being inhabited by the artist,¹⁰⁰ likewise does the baker inhabit

⁹⁷ op. cit., Jungmann, *The Mass*, vol. II, 2-3.

⁹⁸ Jungmann, *The Mass*, vol. II, 2-3.

⁹⁹ Montoya Angel F. Méndez, *Theology of Food: Eating and the Eucharist* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 11-44.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 2, n. 149.

her bread. It is this interrelatedness of the human and her bread that manifests the fullness of the “two-fold” sacrifice. A person is an oblate, an offering, because she brings herself before God. This is what occurs in the offertory procession. It is a procession of the oblates, of those who have come to make and to be made an offering to God. Processing and placing one’s bread upon the table of offering is made intelligible by the oblates preparing the bread to be an offering for sacrificial assimilation.

The baking of bread and the liturgical procession are each bound up in the mystery, as the baking is a means of binding the baker to the sacrifice. The bread is not abstract from the baker; she is her bread; the oblation is the oblate. Aquinas goes on to say that a sacrifice is an oblation that has been "offered to be destroyed in worship of God."¹⁰¹ If the offering remains intact, that is, if it is not broken and no longer useful except as offering, then it is not a sacrifice. Just as the Hebrew would cut his ram in two, so that it can no longer serve the purposes of the home but only be an offering, likewise is the bread of Eucharist broken, so that it cannot return to the dinner table nor be preserved; it must be consumed. For this particular study, what is important to understand is the interrelation of bread, body, and the offertory procession, as well as sacrifice with the act of breaking. What the medieval participant in liturgy would have "felt to be true," to borrow a phrase from Basil Willey, is that her procession with bread to the Lord's table was the "tool" by which she laid herself upon the table of Christ, to be immolated—martyred—in the breaking of bread, thereby becoming a martyr *with* Christ, receiving the fullness of her true self in consecrated return as bread from heaven, so to be incarnated by the Lord of Glory. Through the offertory the human knows herself as one crucified with Christ; by receiving the sanctified bread, she knows herself as one who is likewise resurrected with Christ. While baptism is a participation in the death and resurrection of God in Christ, there remains an inseparability of Baptism and Eucharist. One might say that in the Eucharist the human receives her baptized (crucified) self, recapitulated in Christ. Eucharist informs baptism, not vice versa, although the two are inseparable and even though baptism precedes Eucharist chronologically. It is

¹⁰¹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Q86.1

in the Eucharist that Christ incarnates himself, giving life to mortal flesh.¹⁰² This embodiment occurs when the human has *devoted* herself to Christ, broken in Divine worship by the breaking of her oblation-*become*-sacrifice, which returns to her in the Eucharistic feast endowed with the grace of God made manifest in the bread's true, functional reality as an extension (tool) of Christ, assimilating humanity to divinity and divinity to humanity.

Eucharistic reception is the climax to this baking, processing, and sanctifying action. Not to receive the “remedy of the soul”¹⁰³ is to stop short in the liturgical procession. It is to deny reciprocity with God. Augustine and Chrysostom are already concerned by their congregations’ staying away from receiving the spiritual food, and Caesarius of Arles in the 6th century speaks to those who wear the sacrament around their neck that, ‘if it is beneficial to wear the sacrament how much greater benefit it is to actually feast on it.’ For Augustine, receiving the Eucharistic bread and wine is the consummation of the sacrificial offering. Not to receive the gift that God has so graciously reciprocated by the consecratory action is to impose a unilateral, disinterested framing on the sacrament of *absolute reciprocity*. Unilateral giving does not exist in the Divine Economy. God gives that the human might give. God receives that the human might be received. Not to receive nullifies the offering—denies the contingency of the recipient to the Giver, God. To participate in the offertory is the first assent to this contingency; to receive the consecrated bread and wine is the second assent, which completes the first. If the human does not receive the reciprocal gift of God in communion, by her non-involvement she denies (or in many cases *is denied*) her contingency upon God for fullness of life.¹⁰⁴ To deny reciprocity, or to be denied the Eucharistic gift, is to deny or be denied the fullness of one’s *being-known* with the Son in the reciprocal life of God. It is to be dislocated from one’s selfhood as

¹⁰² Augustine, *Tractate XXV*, 15.

¹⁰³ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism*, XXXVII (ANF).

¹⁰⁴ One would admit the cautious withholding from reception due to one’s sin; however, a holy fear should never lead to anxiety. The Eucharistic food, following John Cassian, is always purifying, always healing. To eat and drink while unrepentant with no intent to amend one’s ways is the caution of Paul and Augustine after him. There is no shortage of harsh warnings regarding one’s approach to the sacrament; however, these, at least in their original intent, are to ensure self-interrogation and preparatory acts prior to reception that are not to lead to avoidance but devotion.

identified in the *being-known* of Father, Spirit, Son. Justin Martyr in the early second century is already clear on this transformation of reception of one's true self in the intensification of the bread and wine made flesh and blood. There is a kind of fusion that occurs such that the assimilating of the Son to the human subject in liturgy is as material as a blood transfusion, but more in the sense of making the human's blood more itself by the body's consuming and being consumed by flesh and blood that is more than the human in herself.

And this food is called among us Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake except one who believes that the things which we teach are true, and has received the washing that is for the remission of sins and for rebirth, and who so lives as Christ handed down. For we do not receive these things as common bread nor common drink; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior having been incarnate by God's logos took both flesh and blood for our salvation, so also we have been taught that the food eucharistized through the word of prayer is from Him, from which our blood and flesh are nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who became incarnate.¹⁰⁵

This "eucharistization" is an enjoining of flesh and blood—human flesh with divine flesh, human blood with divine blood.¹⁰⁶ Irenaeus is even more explicit as to how this blood-flesh (trans)fusion occurs.

By His own blood he redeems us... He has acknowledged the cup as his own blood, from which He bedews our blood; and the bread He has established as His own body, from which he gives increase to our bodies.¹⁰⁷

Justin and Irenaeus appear to read Paul quite literally, in terms of becoming flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone (Ephesians 5.30), but it is Gregory of Nyssa who expresses this link most clearly, especially as it relates to the fall of Adam and how this occurred through consumption.

¹⁰⁵ Justin Martyr, *The First and Second Apologies*, trans. Leslie W. Barnard (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), I.66.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V.1 (ANF).

For it is necessary that the antidote should enter the human vitals in the same way as the deadly poison, in order to secure, through them, that the effect of the remedy may be distributed through the entire system... What, then, is this remedy to be? Nothing else than that very Body which has been shown to be superior to death, and has been the First-fruits of our life."¹⁰⁸

If the human is to be enjoined to God in Christ, assimilated and sustained in, by, and through triune reciprocity, it is necessary that this occur through consuming the remedy that permeates the “entire system” of the body-soul. God disseminates himself in this meal.¹⁰⁹ Cyril turns the notch further in articulating that Christ's re-creating and inhabiting the bread and wine is, through consuming this bread and wine, a re-creating and an inhabiting of the recipient.

With perfect confidence, then, we partake as of the Body and Blood of Christ. For in the figure of bread His body is given to you, and in the figure of wine His blood, that by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ you may become of one body and blood with Him. For when His Body and Blood become the tissue of our members, we become Christ-bearers and as the blessed Peter said, “partakers of the divine nature.”¹¹⁰

The emphasis on the ontological “intensification” that occurs by receiving the Eucharist cannot be pressed too far. 'You are what you eat,' says Augustine,¹¹¹ which is as with Leo the Great to say that, "we pass into the flesh of Him."¹¹² The Eucharistic recipient is adopted by God in, by, and through the bread and wine, completely consumed and overwhelmed by God. This is what takes place as one approaches the holy food and drink, says Maximus.

[The Eucharist] transforms into itself and renders similar to the causal good by grace and participation those who worthily

¹⁰⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism*, XXXVII (NPNF).

¹⁰⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Sermon 13.

¹¹⁰ Cyril of Jerusalem, “The Mystagogical Lectures,” IV.3, *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, trans. Leo P. McCauley and Anthony A. Stephenson, vol. II (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1970).

¹¹¹ Augustine, *Sermons on the New Testament Lessons*, VII.7 (NPNF).

¹¹² Leo the Great, *Letter LIX.II* (NFPF).

share in it. To them there is lacking nothing of this good that is possible and attainable for me, so that they also can be and be called gods by adoption through grace because all of God entirely fills them and leaves no part of them empty of his presence.¹¹³

Not to receive, then, is not to enter into divine-human permeation. If one of these aspects of participation is amiss, there is a notable lack in the human's relation to God, *but primarily as it relates to the human's own understanding of her proximity to God.*

Conclusion

The Eucharistic table is to be understood as inseparable from the church itself. The church is the church because it makes and is made by Eucharist. The tools and movements (liturgy) that surround it are to bear witness to the essential nature of the church as the extension of Christ. The church as Eucharist means that the church is the self-mediation of Christ, who is manifest to the extent that the church exists as a community of reciprocity conditioned by the life, death, and resurrection of its Lord. The church exists hereby to incorporate humanity into the action (labor) of the liturgy and so to be a recipient of the divine fruits of the table (Eucharist) that constitute the *corpus mysticum*. This liturgical constituting of human nature as *mystery*—one who is Eucharistically assimilated to the Eternal Logos, is inseparable from the realization of the ecclesial body as a community of reciprocity and of the individual as a mutually intending participant within the body. The liturgy, therefore, must resist any separation from the very being of the church.¹¹⁴

The church, therefore, is to exist as a body who actively inhabits time and space as constituted by liturgy, as evidenced early on in the offertory rite and bread and wine oblation of the people. In order for self-illumination as a being naturally contingent upon God to occur for the individual, there must be available a bodily engagement in the liturgical actions that constitute and

¹¹³ Maximus, *The Church's Mystagogy*, XXI.

¹¹⁴ Pickstock, 165.

incorporate the human into this reality. This bodily engagement will manifests the permeable nature of the human subject with the signs, symbols, texts, architecture, and all other tools and actions that and who mutually constitute time and space as porous with the Liturgy Christ *is*, so to become aware of the reciprocal and dynamic participatory nature of the human *as* liturgy, which consequentially mediates all human relations. It is this form of mediation, as I will argue in the following section, that the late medieval reforms in liturgical practice loose from the laity, rendering non-clerics and non-elites in society impotent from realizing their full stature in Christ. Instead, the lay participant is severed from the liturgical action and becomes a spectator; the tool of the Eucharist that was instituted to free each for divine permeation is abstracted from the liturgy and its mystical body, alienating the lay person from the truth of her being-in-participation. The lay person is left *speechless*, conditioned to become autonomously pious. That is, her loss of function gives way to a phenomenological loss of substance.

5 Invoking the Secular

“The abolition of private property is the complete emancipation of all human senses and properties.”

– Karl Marx

Introduction

The relationship between humans and their tools, as I have argued in the previous chapter, is a relationship that is not always easy to discern; it is a complex relation that mediates the human to her world and the world to the human. Tools are in no way neutral to this mediating activity and often have a way of inverting the creator-created relation, such that the tool becomes the master of the human rather than an extension of her. This inversion is rarely purposed by the tool’s creator and can occur so seamlessly that the relation may not be problematized prior to the inversion, if ever problematized at all. Understanding the relationship of humans to their tools is, therefore, crucial for human flourishing and self-understanding, because tools mediate the relation between humans and their environment, others, and God. There is, as it were, no unmitigated relation; in order to comprehend the relation one must understand how the relation is mediated by the mediating tool, for what is mediated is inseparable from its medium.

Working with Ivan Illich, I have shown how an inverted relation of the human to her tool suspends the actual relation between subject and object, creating an unbridgeable gap between the two. Following Ferdinand Tönnies, I have argued that these tools are socially constituted and constituting, which either extend the range of human flourishing or constrict the nature of freedom by delimiting human sensibility to perceive oneself as a competitor for limited resources—the modern capitalist. Additionally, I have shown how the

Christian liturgical act of making Eucharist offers a convivial re-tooling that eliminates the fictional divide between subject and object through an act of self-mediation between the human and her Creator. Implicit to this convivial re-tooling is the realization that Christ is in his own Person the eternal assimilation of divine-human action, epistemologically made manifest in the liturgy of the church catholic; and the liturgical action a microcosm of God's act of creating the universe—a calling into being a new creation that is always being created.

Creation is understood here as an eternal action, and as such there is never a point at which creation is either complete or incomplete. It *is* in its *becoming*—eternally becoming what it already is. Difference, here, lies in participation, and the eternal distinction between Creator and creation is an eternal volition of love by both Creator and created. The created difference is a freedom to love without coercive return. There is no obligatory love for the Creator by the created, nor by Creator for creation. Love is, however, compulsory, a sort of non-compulsory compulsion—an irresistible desire to love that which alone is lovable. Only Love can be loved,¹ for only Love can be loved for itself as it *is* the very return it demands. Love only obliges itself, and once it is given it "must" be returned, even though its return is, as Milbank describes the return of the gift, a non-identical repetition.² Love is an eternally repeated event that manifests itself in differentiated energies.³

Tracing late Medieval reforms in liturgy, whereby the lay person is continuously, even if not systematically or “intentionally,” extracted from this particular bodily comportment, I seek to show in the following section how this distancing of the lay subject from the movements of liturgy serve to alienate her from knowing herself and all things in their contingent reality in the above exclusive relation. This exclusive relation, as we have seen in Maximus and throughout the early medieval church, is the human relatedness to each person, place or thing as a byproduct of her relation to God and each

¹ Maximus, *Letter 2*, 397B.

² John Milbank, "Can A Gift Be Given? Prolegomena To A Future Trinitarian Metaphysic," *Modern Theology* 11, no. 1 (1995): 154, doi:10.1111/j.1468-0025.1995.tb00055.x.

³ Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Sermon 7.

person's, place's, or thing's exclusive relational contingency in the church as liturgy. This exclusive relation should not be mistaken as an evangelical appeal to a "personal relationship with Jesus." Rather, because the origin of human identity and relationality is God, the capacity to relate to anything and everything exists as a consequence of the Creator's relationship to creation in its multiplicity. The extent to which the human relates to God as *imago Dei* is the extent to which she relates to all things. Peter is not related to God because of his right relation to Paul; Peter's exclusive relation to God exacts his right relatedness to Paul who shares a common nature and reality as an image of the Eternal recapitulated in Christ, for which both are created. The liturgical diminution of this exclusive relating to God and consequential relating to all things did not happen over night; rather, it happened over the course of several hundred years. It should also be made clear at the outset that it is not being argued that the reforms to be discussed below were in any way an attempt to create this dislocation. At best, they are efforts to heighten the human's awareness of the awesomeness of God and at the very least accidental, each of which bear quite unforeseen consequences. It will be argued that these liturgical transitions instigate and make sensible a human subjectivity apart from an exclusive relation to the Divine, i.e. secularism. Secularism, and its not so distant cousin humanism, is hereby understood as the flattened-out construal of human relationality whereby material bodies do not relate to other material bodies except as self-contingent, sovereign and autonomous material bodies. There is no relating to the other except in the direct, unmitigated relation of mutually exclusive subjects or mutually inclusive subjects of like nature. Again, this shift in human relationality is not to be causally linked; rather, it is the shaping of the human imaginary, the construal of desire that is to be emphasized, one that opens the subject to a sort of onto-theological construal of reality, which in the end creates an unbridgeable chasm between the celestial and the terrestrial.

What will be evidenced below is how medieval liturgical reforms serve to *substantiate* liturgical signs and symbols, relieving them from their relation-creating function *in-the-between* of human creative participation in God. This move from a function-oriented ontology, in which all things exists in a

participatory relation, to a substance-oriented ontology, whereby existence *in-itself* is purported, is a move from active manifesting and mediating toward a liturgy of spectacle that disassociates the liturgical action from the being of the church. The church becomes the mediator of divine substance, divided from the Christ whose body it mediates, rendered the arena within which the spectacle of divine substance occurs, separable from the temporal reality of the ecclesial body. The implications of liturgical spectacle as opposed to active manifesting implies the substantive communication of a wholly-other *fixed* reality that is always external to the one receiving that which is “mediated.” This mediated otherness only maintains the otherness of both parties involved in the *exchange*, as is the case within a *gesellschaft*. To actively manifest, however, is to mediate or bring together what is at once inherent and transcendent to she who manifests by participation. It is necessary to understand that the one who manifests, that which is made-manifest, and the manifesting action are each inseparable differentiations of a whole economy of divine-human permeation. Only in this sense can the church be understood to mediate God; that is, through its liturgy and the reciprocal life of its people formed and conditioned by it, the church becomes that which it mediates—Christ’s body.

The assimilation of humanity to divinity, if not "new" with the Christ-event of God's becoming Human but the very act of God's creating *as* an eternal act exceptionally made-manifest *in the fullness of time*, is then to endow the created with divinity for its eternal manifesting by participating in God's eternal creative act—an eternal state of becoming, i.e. deification. The assimilation of human nature to the divine nature in Christ, which is the gathering of human nature into triune reciprocity, is a return of the human to her original *function* as she who manifests and mediates the truth of the eternal *relation-of-participation* all of creation *is* in God. This *relation-of-participation* names the absolute contingency of all things in their becoming assimilation to the Eternal Son in his own absolute relation of love with the Father and Spirit. That which has been fully assimilated to God in Christ is eternally being assimilated to God in Christ, but this assimilation, as an act of God, is an eternal action that is always eschatologically complete in its

becoming. It is never fixed; it is always moving toward completion—deification. If it were to cease in movement it would either be subsumed into divinity, negating the particularity of difference granted humanity at creation, or it would become a fixed entity in its own right, which is impossible. The human is *God* only by participation, not *in-herself*. That is, the human exists only in relation to God's own absolute self-contingency. There is no existence apart from participation in God, even if participation is rendered negatively.⁴

The focus of this interrogation will be on key elements in the development of liturgy throughout the late Medieval world, namely: Eucharistic controversies and practice in terms of its offering, baking, touching, receiving, and the pieties surrounding each; the condensing of the *libelli* (multiple liturgical books) into a single missal or sacramentary; church architecture and how it is fashioned by and fashions the movements of liturgy; as well as transitions in the ordination of priests from pastoral need to stipendiary demand, including rites involving the consecrating of the hands of the priest and how this relates to the consecration of the Eucharist and its preparation.

I

The liturgical *habitus* of the church throughout its history is hardly something that can be examined locally and universalized as normative for the church catholic. There are many liturgical forms occurring in the various locales of the early and medieval church. What will be highlighted below are a variety of practices that manifest both the brevity of human contingency on God and reforms that largely undermine the truth of human identity in the *being-known* of God. Once again, it is not being argued that the various shifts or reforms in liturgy throughout the medieval era are an effort to *create* a secular, humanistic identity—quite the contrary; rather, it is to show how the logic of secularism, or the secular imaginary, is nevertheless embedded in the reformed practices that were meant to sustain the contingency they negate.

What is crucial for this investigation is firstly that the church's articulation of how one comes into contact with divinity is through the

⁴ See Chapter 3, n. 38.

material, specifically through bread and wine. Second, to prepare an oblation is to prepare oneself to receive; third, to process with one's oblation is to participate in the procession of martyrs with Christ; fourth, to be broken as a sacrificial offering to God is to be assimilated to divinity through the Eucharistic rite; and fifth, to receive the consecrated bread is to be fused together—assimilated—with Christ, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, ontologically transubstantiated to be God by adoption. What is at stake, therefore, is whether or not the teachings of the church with all the soteriological and ontological implications of one's participation in Holy Eucharist match up with the participatory *actions* of the everyday lay person.⁵

Eucharistic theology is not at issue, at least not directly; rather, the question this study is asking is: what is the theology embedded in Eucharistic practice in the late medieval church, primarily in the West? Following Bourdieu, there is an inherent logic (an inherent theology) in the *habitus* of a social body.⁶ Character and cognition are inseparable and theory *never* comes before praxis; the two are distinct parts of a whole. Even if a particular theory initiates a particular practice it can only do so congruent with or in opposition to a prior *habitus* inscribed on persons, what Bourdieu calls “schemes of perception.”⁷ To reiterate the point I've been pressing: knowledge, especially knowledge of oneself as *imago Dei*—the human as utterly contingent upon the perichoretic life of Holy Trinity, is for the early and medieval church available only by way of participation in the liturgical drama that incorporates the human subject into *absolute reciprocity* of Love, i.e. deification, which is the becoming likeness through the church's *habitus*—liturgy. Liturgy, therefore, is the *habitus* of the church inhabited through participatory movements proscribed by the Liturgy-Christ, in whom all liturgies find their intelligibility, either positively or negatively. The accessibility of this liturgical inhabiting is how the human gains understanding of herself *as* liturgy (*homo-liturgicus*)—as one who participates in the Liturgy-Christ, assimilated to the Second Person of the Trinity in creation, revealed in the Incarnation, and continuously made-manifest through one's proportionate *relation-of-participation*. Volition is

⁵ As will be clearer later, I am arguing here that they do not.

⁶ Bourdieu, 52-65.

⁷ Ibid., 54.

key; however, volitive participation arises out of non-conscious habituation; it does not precede incorporation in the *habitus*.⁸ Awareness is *inessential* to what one knows through the *habitus* of the community. No one is ever completely aware of what they are doing, and what a person does always *means* more than they are capable of understanding or determining in the act.⁹ In other words, one could be a Christian unawares, as it were, and this same person could “decide” to become the Christian she is all the while remaining oblivious to the plethora of movements and conditionings that led her to the “decision” she was *conditioned* to make. The *habitus* in which the human is disciplined construes her imagination to perceive all things in the particular way of the *habitus*, which will not determine the actions or awareness of the individual causally, but rather remains the perceptive parameters by which the subject will inhabit space and time.

The Eucharistic transformation of the bread and wine is the Eucharistic transformation of the liturgical participant. By the movement of God's descending upon the elements the participant is raised into God, assimilated to the flesh and blood of the Son to participate in *absolute reciprocal* Love. To know this, is to know through participating in the liturgical action that habituates one to know that this is occurring in liturgy. Speaking words to express, remember, understand or gain awareness of this truth is intelligible only by those who are engaged in the movements of liturgy. This is the non-translatability of the liturgical linguistic. Only those who inhabit the liturgy are able to speak and listen to the language, for the language is in the actions of the liturgical body. Liturgy is the speech-act of the church, and as speech-act it makes possible and available a certain form of thinking: it is thought, word, and deed in all their inseparability. This is what is meant by one's proportionate relation, such that the articulative capacity is determined by one's bodily comportment, much like speaking a foreign language. To know the words is not to speak the language. To speak the language is to be part of the culture in which the language is spoken and "makes sense." The extent of enculturation will determine the mastery of the language, which does not

⁸ See Chapter 3, n. 11.

⁹ Bourdieu, 69.

mean that one will necessarily be able to grammatically parse sentences well, only that he or she can speak sensibly *with* the mutually perceiving culture.

It is clear, therefore, that the extent of engagement and the manner of participation in liturgy will give way to a particular understanding of hierarchy and ecclesiology. The alienation of the lay person from her participatory role in liturgy is something already made abundantly clear by Jungmann, Dix, De Lubac, and others. What has not been made explicit is that this is not only an issue of ecclesiology or clericalism; rather, it is the collateral damage on both the human's own self-knowledge and, as a consequence, the rising of a social imaginary, which is no less liturgical, that ceases to have ontological reference. This constricting of the body's movement—the alienation from liturgy, delimits one's self-knowledge to a being that exists outside the divine economy, as opposed to a clergy person who *does* liturgy and is therefore assimilated to the Son in divine reciprocity.

Jungmann masterfully outlines these various transitions throughout history; however, his focus is largely on the “old grandmother” who sits in church as a spectator fingering her rosary while liturgy takes place and the need for the communal celebration to be communal and not something “said” by priests.¹⁰ While this is crucial for any reasonable ecclesiology, it is necessary to realize that the old grandmother's alienation from liturgy does not simply give way to “individualism” or bad forms of piety.¹¹ This dislocation from liturgical participation is an alienation from *knowing* one's human nature as assimilated to the divine nature in Christ. The human is existentially reduced to a nature that bears no ontological reference beyond *being in-itself* or *being-in-the-world*. Human nature is knowable as immanent to the individual, or at best to the social body. The liturgies of the early medieval church seem to be *aware* of this body-knowing of its participants. There appears to be no explication of this among the fathers, although there is plenty of evidence that participation is crucial to the life of the faithful. What is explicit, is that a person is who they are in liturgy, for only in liturgy do they become the image they are.

¹⁰ Josef A. Jungmann, *The Sacrifice of the Church; the Meaning of the Mass*. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1956), 46-63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

Since the inception of the church the need to participate in Christ's offering to the Father has been an essential aspect of what it means to be his follower. Bringing an analogous offering of bread and wine to the Christian assembly was a normative practice, whether it was held in procession or placed on a side table without much ado.¹² The ceremonial aspect of the offertory enters liturgical praxis by the mid-late second century, with processional norms in Rome, Milan and Northern Africa by the third and early fourth centuries. The offertory procession became the demarcation of the liturgy of the catechumens and the liturgy of the faithful (now commonly known as the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist).¹³ What is important about this is that the unbaptized were unable to participate in making offering or the offertory rite. The importance of this cannot be underestimated. Taking place in the Eucharistic rite, of which the offertory is its beginning, is the volitive participation in the assimilation of the church to the Son, by the power of the Spirit, to be a single offering to the Father. The offerings of bread and wine are not accidental to this act. The oblation and the oblate are inseparable. The unbaptized cannot make offering because they have not yet *intended* their assimilation in Christ. To receive the offering of the unbaptized would be to sever the oblate from her oblation and transform the oblation to an exchange of goods, for it is in the reception of the Eucharistic bread and wine, of which the unbaptized are unable, that makes sense of the oblation as an extension of the oblate. To give and not receive places the dignity of the gift in human action or ability rather than the act of God in Christ who alone is able. Not to receive is to deny (be denied) relational mediation with God in the Eucharist, whereby the recipient becomes Eucharist. It is, therefore, expected that anyone who brings their offering for the liturgy would also receive. This reciprocal relation is evidenced clearly in Walafrid Strabo who reproves those who bring their bread and wine as an offering but then leave before receiving.¹⁴ While Eucharistic reception

¹² Theodor Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 8; Archdale A. King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1957), 271; Jungmann, *The Mass*, vol. II, 6-8.

¹³ Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy*, 48.

¹⁴ King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church*, 273.

withers away throughout the early medieval era, it still appears that at least up through the 9th century, if a person brought bread and/or wine as an oblation for sacrificial offering they should likewise receive the fruits of the table.

The theological, as well as phenomenological, importance of the whole church's active participation in the act of making bread for use in the liturgy of the Eucharist as well as participation in the offertory procession and then reception of the consecrated bread and wine cannot be stressed enough.

Phenomenologically, knowledge is something that arises from a *habitus*. A person's life and work is concretely expressed in bread and wine, that which is fashioned by the labor of their own body as well as being the everyday stuff of life. The meaning of the bread is bound up together with its making and offering and the one making and offering; to bring bread and wine to offer grants to the bread and wine its sacrificial meaning. As it is with Aquinas, if the oblation of bread and wine is not used for the Eucharistic celebration then it is not a sacrifice. It is impossible, however, to think that all the bread and wine brought by the people would have been used for Eucharist.

Nevertheless, to place the common bread and wine of all on a common paten and a common table is to gather the offerings together as one. To use only some of the *gathered* bread is no longer to distinguish between any one person's offering. Gathered together, it is now a single offering, and to divide is to separate *one* offering. We see here in the earliest practices of the offertory that any sense of an offering and sacrifice is that of the whole people, not simply pope, bishop, priest or deacon.¹⁵ What is clearly evidenced in the practice of gathering the bread together as a single offering is the implicit nature of the Eucharistic tool (offertory) as a reciprocal action of interdependent relations. This particular form of gathering the fruits of human labor as an oblation will eventually fade away, and the offertory rite will cease to image the interdependency of the ecclesial body.

To give bread and wine is to give of one's own substance;¹⁶ therefore, to lay one's bread upon the table of the Lord is to participate in one's eschatological recapitulation in Christ, uniting each to the whole of Christ's

¹⁵ Klauser, 113

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 110

body, the church. The early church had no difficulty drawing this connection. Consistently, the Christian is referred to a grain of wheat ground together with the whole body of grains to make a single loaf. Cyprian goes further to say that the body comes together both in bread and chalice, and with Christ by the same.

And this we can plainly perceive to be contained in the sacred mystery of the cup. For Christ bore the burden of us all, having borne the burden of our sins. And so we can see that by water is meant God's people, whereas Scripture reveals that by wine is signified the blood of Christ. When, therefore, water is mixed with wine in the cup, the people are made one with Christ and the multitude of believers are bonded and united with Him in whom they have come to believe. And this bonding and union between water and wine in the Lord's cup is achieved in such a way that nothing can thereafter separate their intermingling... Hence, when we consecrate the cup of the Lord, water alone cannot be offered, no more than can wine alone. For should anyone offer up only wine, then the blood of Christ will be there, but without us, whereas if there is only water, the people will be there, but without Christ. So it is only when both are mingled, bonded, united, and fused one with the other that this spiritual and divine mystery is accomplished. And just as the Lord's cup consists neither of water alone nor wine alone but requires both to be intermingled together, so, too, the Lord's body can neither be flour alone nor water alone but requires that both be united and fused together so as to form the structure of one loaf of bread. And under this same sacred image our people are represented as having been made one, for just as numerous grains are gathered, ground, and mixed all together to make into one loaf, so in Christ, who is the bread of

heaven, we know there is but one body and that every one of us has been fused together and made one with it.¹⁷

Cyprian's account expresses clearly that the offerer is her offering.¹⁸ As noted before, the ontology of a "thing" in the world of the early church is its function.¹⁹ The bread functions as a bodily offering, which is the same reason why Ignatius will refer to himself as wheat, ground by the teeth of the wild beasts.²⁰ The offerer is an offerer inasmuch as she functions as such. If she does not offer, her ontology is phenomenologically reduced to a substance orientation, no longer existing in a *relation-of-participation*. Also emphasized by Cyprian is that union with the wine—Christ—brings together the differentiated elements of the bread and water—the people.²¹ Just as common bread is made by mixing flour with water, likewise is heavenly bread—the body of Christ—made by each person's union with Christ.

With the introduction of the papal stational mass in the seventh century the offertory is changed, perhaps only or at least largely due to matters of practicality. It is no longer a procession of the entire gathered body; rather, the pope and his deacons come down among the people to gather their offerings.²² While the people are no longer participating in the procession itself, it remains that the gifts are gathered and the procession retains the original intent of gathering the body together and coming before God to participate in Christ's assimilating of human nature to himself. By the eighth century, however, the bread and wine offered by the people are no longer placed on the altar table itself; rather, it is brought up by the deacon and placed *post altare*.²³ Again, this development appears to be quite practical in nature. For one reason or another, most of the people were no longer receiving communion, making the amount of bread needed for celebration less

¹⁷ Cyprian, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, trans. G. W. Clarke, vol. III (New York: Newman Press, 1984), 63.13.

¹⁸ Cyprian, *Letter 63*, 13; See also Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 110-123.

¹⁹ See Chapter 3, n. 43.

²⁰ *op. cit.*, Edward Godfrey Cuthbert Frederic Atchley, *Ordo Romanus Primus* (London: De La More Press, 1905), 84.

²¹ Cyprian, *Letter 63*, 13.

²² Klauser, 75; Jungmann, *The Mass*, vol. II, 6-7; King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church*, 272.

²³ Jungmann, *The Mass*, vol. II, 9.

and less.²⁴ Rather than continue the practice of taking some bread and wine from the whole of the gathered bread-body and wine-blood of the people, however, the priest now uses only his own bread and wine offering from his own store.²⁵ Understanding this practical shift theologically and how it is "felt" over time phenomenologically, shows that the oblation of the people, because it functions only as an oblation, suspends the lay people from their participation in the sacrifice of the church. Lay people make an oblation offering, but it is only the clergy who make a sacrificial offering; therefore, it is only the clergy who "truly" participate in being assimilated to the Son, being likewise the only ones gathered into divine reciprocity.

Habituation gives way to imagination, for a person's inclinations are shaped by the *habitus* in which he or she is engaged. What constitutes truth and reality for a person will be determined by the wide-range of habitudes in which he or she is involved.²⁶ This is not to say that what their actions manifest will be true in the sense of empirical verification; however, it does mean that what is "felt" to be true is determined by how one is habituated to "feel." The saying, "How can something so wrong feel so right?" is only able to be asked by one whose inclinations are disciplined to feel "right" about that which is "wrong." Intuition is learned through a particular *habitus* and is inseparable from the plethora of material factors, bodily and environmental, that shape a person's imagination throughout their lifetime. This is no less true in liturgy, especially as it relates to the liturgical proximity of the Christian to her God. Alienating the lay person from her participation in the procession itself and incorporation in the church's sacrifice, even for the sake of practicality, displaces her imagination. There remains an awareness of Christ's presence and communication in, by, and through the bread and wine; however, this communication no longer has anything to do with participation in the sacrificial oblation proper. The presence of God is no longer bound up together with the participatory action with the whole of the body in the making of Eucharist.

²⁴ See King, 271-275. At least into the ninth century, the people are expected to make an offering at each Eucharistic celebration and are also expected to receive communion.

²⁵ Jungmann, *The Mass*, vol. II, 9-10.

²⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 149ff.

The major shift in lay participation begins to be most visible in the ninth century, but it is no longer for reasons of feasibility. The sanctity of the person and the oblation become the focal point of the liturgical action. Of course this is nothing new, especially as it relates to the Eucharistic celebration. Paul already warns of partaking of the bread and wine without having first examining one's faithfulness in his first letter to the Corinthians.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.²⁷

This warning is carried on consistently throughout the writings of the fathers. Augustine and Chrysostom are careful to articulate that none should receive the sacrament without true repentance; however, both Augustine and Chrysostom are likewise mournful that many do not receive when they come to church. Continuing their plea in the early ninth century, complemented with a sense of reasonable abstention, Jonas, bishop of Orleans, makes his own appeal.

There are some, burdened by sin, who are rightly deprived of participation in so great a sacrament by the judgment of a priest. What is even more perilous and worthy of correction, there are a good many who withdraw from this sacrament partly out of carelessness, partly out of sloth. Such people hardly even [receive] in the course of a year, except on the three great feasts, and then, more out of custom than out of devotion. These latter either do not know, or do not want to

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 11.26-29.

know, that the soul deprived of spiritual food dies just as the body does if deprived of food and drink.²⁸

The tension is held together: if the people are among the baptized and are present in church they should receive; if they are in a state of sin, they should abstain. What is most important to remember in conjunction with the Eucharist and the purity of the recipient, however, is that the holiness of the recipient is not understood to alter the truth of the Eucharist itself, but rather its effects. Additionally, it is crucial to remember that life in the medieval world depends on this sacred food and drink.²⁹ Not to receive is not a matter of little consequence for the medieval Christian, for those who decline to receive is a matter of faithful concern, a holy fear. Additionally, the injunction not to receive is also out of concern for the whole of the body. If there are those who unworthily receive communion, because the Eucharist is a unifying food and drink, it would contaminate the whole of the faithful body. The instruction to interrogate oneself before receiving communion, therefore, bears salvific concern for both the individual communicant and the whole of the gathered body. This latter concern, however, will be picked up in the theological writings that surround the Eucharist in the late medieval era, beginning with Paschasius Radbertus' publication of his *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* in 831.

Radbertus' treatise on the Eucharist changes theology, at least in the West, what Alexander Schmemmann often refers to as "western captivity," from which it has never quite recovered.³⁰ Many before Radbertus have written on the sacraments, focusing on the Eucharist as the sacrament of sacraments, most notably Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem, Augustine, Maximus Confessor, et

²⁸ Jonas of Orleans, *De Institutione Laicali*, II.18, cited in Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1982), 97.

²⁹ Caesarius, "Sermon 187," in *Saint Caesarius of Arles: Sermons.*, trans. Mary Magdeleine Mueller, vol. III (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1973).

³⁰ This, I will argue, is due in large part to the church throughout history having placed the theological cart before the liturgical horse. Rather than realizing and fully articulating the implicit theology in liturgical action, whereby theological articulation bears a "descriptive" nature, theological descriptors have become abstracted from the liturgical actions of the theological body—the church, and are no longer sensible or intelligible within the *body schema* of the church. Again, liturgy makes theology possible—even necessary, and theology is in a sense convertible with liturgy, yet always as constituted by liturgy and not vice versa.

al; however, each of the fathers prior to Radbertus deal with the Eucharist in its liturgical context, within the action of its making.³¹ Radbertus, however, introduces a bifurcated dialogue that removes the Eucharist from the liturgical action of the offering body, thereby separating the sacred food from the sacred action. This understanding of the mystery, while it remains the action of Christ that grants the Eucharist his presence, ceases to bear much if any relation to the participatory actions of the people involved in the making. Radbertus takes up Ambrose to argue that Christ's presence in the Eucharist occurs through the priest's repetition of the words of institution. However, unlike Ambrose, Radbertus divides the words of institution from liturgy, such that one could repeat the words of institution only and still receive the "same results." No longer bound up together with the liturgical action, the shift from a function-oriented ontology to a substance-oriented ontology is introduced, which will plague dialogues in Eucharistic theology to the present day.

This theological bifurcation is already established in the liturgical action of the ninth century. Before Radbertus writes his *De Corpore*, Charlemagne issues a liturgical legislation that alienates the lay person completely from the table of offering; lay persons are permitted only to make their offering outside the choir screen.³² It is also common at this time for the lay person to receive communion only in one kind or the wine through a straw, and to have the bread placed in the mouth and not in the hands.³³ Many of these reforms are likely due to the uprising of the Medieval penitential laws, which have grave consequences for those who mishandle the bread and chalice of Eucharist. In an eighth century penitential ascribed to Bede, there are numerous injunctions placed on those who drop, spill, or lose any part of the Eucharist.

If a drop [from the chalice] falls upon the altar, he shall do penance for three days. If on account of carelessness a mouse eats [the host], thirty or forty days. He who has lost a small portion of it in the church and [who] does not find it shall do penance for twenty days or sing seventy psalms every day...

³¹ Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 74.

³² op. cit. King, 273.

³³ Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 83-96

He who spills the chalice at the end of the service shall do penance for thirty days.³⁴

These rites of penance were of no small consequence. During the time of penance, the individual would often be expected to live only on bread and water,³⁵ but would have the greater consequence of not being able to receive communion during their period of penance, which could jeopardize one's salvation. In the "So-called Roman Penitential" (ca. 830) the consecrated bread and wine are considered very dangerous elements.

If the host falls to the ground from the hand of the officiant, and if any of it is found, every bit of what is found shall be burnt in the place in which it fell, and its ashes [shall be] concealed beneath the altar, and the priest shall do penance for half a year. And if it is found, it shall be purified above, and he shall do penance for forty days. If it only slipped to the altar, he shall perform a special fast. If through negligence anything drips from the chalice to the ground, it shall be licked up with the tongue, the board shall be scraped, and [the scrapings] shall be burnt with fire; and he shall do penance for forty days. If the chalice drips on the altar, the minister shall suck it up, and the linen which came in contact with the drop shall be washed [three?] times, and he shall do penance for three days.³⁶

If the abbot of Corbie was not familiar with this particular penitential, it would certainly have been easily understood, and the instructions for dealing with the sacrament certainly bears the mark of "real presence," and not merely "spiritual" in the modern sense of the word. The above penitentials, however, provide insight as to how the Eucharist was "felt" and comprehended in the medieval world. It is no great surprise that the chalice would be taken away nor that the bread would no longer be handled by the lay person. Whose fault would it be if the bread or wine hit the ground? Who would have to lick it up,

³⁴ John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, eds., *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principal "libri Poenitentiales" and Selections from Related Documents* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 230.

³⁵ McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, 275.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 310.

scrape it, and fast for half a year? Danger doubly surrounded the Eucharist, but now, once again, this dangerous food is of a "substantial" matter. It is not only the activities of the human—her sin or righteousness, that are of concern, but it is actually the materials of the bread and wine that are exclusively linked to the body and blood of Christ that if you spill it you have spilled God on the floor and must lick Christ up and suffer the consequences of one who has essentially thrown God on the ground. In this light, the decline of lay participation throughout the medieval era becomes easy to comprehend. Not only are legalities of offering and receiving on the rise, but there is a growing anxiety among the people who approach the veiled body and blood. There is a "real damned if you do damned if you don't" tension that is only heightened with the Eucharistic controversies that rise up in the ninth century, which lead only to further controversies in the centuries to follow. The "dangerous" nature of the Eucharist is something introduced early on by Cyril of Jerusalem, and gains increasing attention throughout the ritual developments of the medieval world.³⁷

The growing pietistic concerns and unholy anxieties that surround the bread and wine of communion increasingly distance the lay person from the sacred meal. Thus far, however, this distancing has proved to be accidental and primarily a consequence of "organic" pieties and heightened concerns for the reality of Christ's body mediated by the bread and wine. In other words, there is a faithful attempt to take seriously the truth of Christ's body and blood extended to humanity under the species of bread and wine. It is, once again, impossible to universalize the experience of the whole church regarding its manner of offering and receiving; however, by the turn of ninth century there is clear evidence that Eucharistic praxis is giving way to a brave new Christendom.

It has been shown how the alienation from making offering and participating in the offertory rite alters the capacity of the lay Christian to *perceive* her relation to God, whereby she ceases to relate to God in the liturgical economy through an active, functional role and now as a passive

³⁷ Josef A. Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1965), 243-256.

spectator and, at best, recipient of a divine substance by unilateral donation. What will be shown below is how new material factors serve to complete this polarization of the liturgist from her liturgy—and, therefore, from the eschatological reality of the church, which surrounds the elements of the Eucharistic feast, namely bread.

II

In the late thirteenth century, John Duns Scotus introduces the notion of a univocity of being, whereby God and humanity are subject to the metaphysical priority of Being.³⁸ Scotus stresses a radical distance of the human from God that introduces, says Catherine Pickstock, an abandonment of participatory relating.³⁹ God and humanity relate to one another not through manifesting encounters of the material world but by a contractual relation of divine and human willing or sovereign voluntarism.⁴⁰ According to Pickstock, Scotus relativizes the material, creating a sharp division between matter and form, and form from any necessary attachments at all. Objects are hereby defined as independent from the material, which means that an object can be known whether or not the object itself exists in actuality.⁴¹ Perhaps the most pressing consequence of this severing of form and content is the erasure of telos. Scotus' prioritizing of intellection and sovereign will, orchestrated by the forces of contractual obligation, asserts that the will of God is independent from the telos of the material world or its contingency upon the divine

³⁸ Pickstock, 121-166. See also Conor Cunningham, *Genealogy of Nihilism: Philosophies of Nothing and the Difference of Theology* (London: Routledge, 2002), 28-56.

³⁹ John Duns Scotus, "Ordinatio," I.3, in *Philosophical Writings: A Selection*, trans. Allan Bernard Wolter (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987), 4-8. By suggesting that "being" cannot be predicated univocally, Scotus is distinguishing that "being" is suggesting that God is a predicative "being" within "Uncreated Being" that cannot be predicated. The human is likewise a predicative being within "Uncreated Being," which renders the common trait between the species God and human is the common genus "Uncreated Being." See Wolter, n. 2, 165.

⁴⁰ Pickstock, 122-166.

⁴¹ Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I.5. Scotus sections off the physics from metaphysics, noting the absurdity of physics as the beginning of metaphysics. However, Scotus fails to acknowledge that "physics as the beginning point of metaphysics" is the human condition. This denial of human understanding as first sensible, as is shown above in Gregory of Nyssa, transgresses the progression of knowledge in the created order and stifles Scotus' ability to connect the two, which renders his account of Being implausible.

energies that make this telos manifest.⁴² God and creation, each existing within Being, bear no necessary or contingent relation, except by divine decree. This “fiat of divine volition” also displaces act and being within God, such that God’s actions and God’s essence and the material relating by God to creation are arbitrary and do not infer from one movement to the next—each action connected only by divine, sovereign choice.⁴³ God, in theory, could just as well relate to humanity in the flesh of Christ as he could in the metal of a modern dinner table. The form no longer bears an inner logic nor does the content have an essential form. Scotus’ claim, as Pickstock shows, is that the material “thing” is inconsequential to human knowing. Even if we are conditioned by the tangible it is not the tangible that is proper to our intellection.⁴⁴ This runs diametrically opposed to that of John of Damascus and Thomas Aquinas, who each argue that God’s becoming man—in the flesh—is because the human is capable only of knowing as “flesh.” Following Gregory of Nyssa, we would say that it is the flesh that enables us to transcend the flesh, which Scotus suggests is improbable, for the flesh must be overturned rather than completed.⁴⁵ One can have knowledge of a thing without the existence of the object or its form.⁴⁶ Knowledge of the truth of a thing can precede the creation of the thing in truth, which is to say that the body and soul are ontologically separable. In other words, divine relationality is first and foremost an intellectual encounter irrespective of the body. Theory precedes and takes precedence over practice, for unlike Gregory of Nyssa and the church fathers with him, which is carried forth by Aquinas whom Scotus

⁴² Mary Beth Ingham and Mechthild Dreyer, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus: An Introduction* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 38-51.

⁴³ Pickstock, 137. This is also the claim of today’s Apocalyptic Theology, whereby God “erupts” in time, but each eruption is arbitrary and bears no essential likeness to any before or after the current event.

⁴⁴ Ingham and Dreyer, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus*, 38-51.

⁴⁵ John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II. Scotus argues, contrary to Gregory of Nyssa, that there is no point in distinguishing between the essence and energies of God, by which the human knows God; rather, what God is and that God is are the same. This follows Scotus’ claim that what is knowable by sense perception, i.e. God, cannot be “Uncreated Being,” which is unknowable to the senses. Scotus outright denies the knowledge of the sense shown by John of Damascus (which is in keeping with Gregory of Nyssa), in his argument against Henry of Ghent.

⁴⁶ Robert Pasnau, “Abstract Truth in Thomas Aquinas,” in Henrik Lagerlund, ed., *Representation and Objects of Thought in Medieval Philosophy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 33-61.

rejects, whereby God is knowable by his energies and by a similitude of creation and human action, Scotus locates God's revelation not in likeness but in the radical discontinuity of the physical order.⁴⁷ This is because movement is in no way bound together with nature, which is also radically distant from Aquinas' understanding of grace completing nature. Nature, according to Scotus, must be overridden. Image and likeness, unlike it is with Irenaeus, are ontologically divided by Scotus bearing no essential relation.⁴⁸ Scotus' rejection of the *analogia entis* as developed by Aquinas is the rejection of what has herein been referred to as a function-oriented ontology. This functional ontology described above is an ontology of participation, whereby material realities participate in Being by their orientation to and purpose in Being. "It" exists because "it" has a name and purpose.⁴⁹ In other words, and to put the matter plainly and most explicitly, a thing exists because it has a form (likeness) and telos (image) inextricable from the thing's material actuality.

As Catherine Pickstock shows, Scotus' "novel assertion" that privileges epistemology over ontology has grave consequences for Eucharistic theology. Scotus' disjunction of Christ's Body and Soul alters the meaning of transubstantiation, such that the Eucharistic action ceases to terminate in Christ's Body. With Aquinas, this Eucharistic "termination" is the assimilation of the material bread and wine to the Eternal Son, which transforms the function of the bread and wine into its true and natural

⁴⁷ Pickstock, 132.

⁴⁸ See John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II. In *Argument II*, Scotus offers his principal argument, which states that, "no concept representing reality is formed naturally in the mind except by reason of those factors which naturally motivate the intellect. Now these factors are the active intellect, and either the sense image or the object revealed in the sense image. No simple concept, then, is produced naturally in our mind except that which can arise in virtue of these factors... Consequently, the argument may be formulated as follows: No object will produce a simple and proper concept of another object, unless it contains this second object essentially or virtually. No created object, however, contains the 'Uncreated' essentially or virtually—at least in the way that the two are actually related, namely as what is by nature secondary to include virtually what is prior to it. It is also obvious that the created does not contain, as part of its essence, something that is not merely common, but is exclusively proper to the 'Uncreated.' Therefore, it produces no simple and proper concept of the "Uncreated" at all." There is for Scotus at once a commonality of genus between God and humanity and yet the knowability of God is insensible, a matter of faith alone. Hence Scotus' imperative that nature must be rejected as it regards metaphysics.

⁴⁹ Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 179-199.

concomitant relation as a conduit of divine grace.⁵⁰ Without its teleological function the bread and wine remain mere food stuffs, rather than the transubstantiated materials that manifest the grandeur of God. The function is a substance, the substance a function. The irony of Scotus' denigration of the material, creating a radical disparity between material and truth, elevates the importance of the material in the temporal world. Materials now possess a subjectivity wherein truth is no longer understood through an ontological employment, but is now a separate truth *in-itself* in each atomistic instance. It is this atomization, the severing of each particle from another, that makes the form of an object meaningless, for the content resides *a priori* in the abstract. This objectivity does not understand truth and reality in a functional relation to ends as in the ancient world; rather, a thing is true or real without, and necessarily without, existential or transcendental reference. The material is now existentially true without a participation in God, for it exists in Being and bears no participatory relation to divinity except by a covenant of wills.

The division of form and content from existential realities is already visible in the liturgical practices of the late medieval church. While it is impossible historically to say whether a theological argument follows or precedes a liturgical practice, as Pickstock carefully reminds, it is no less the case, however, that the theoretical always arises out of a *habitus*—even if unwittingly,⁵¹ and the particular *habitus* of much of the church has moved, at least by the time of Scotus, to a sharp divisibility of body and soul, both in Christ and in the human subject. It has been shown how this arose in the offertory. It will now be shown what the additional, material realities are that make this schism between form and content imaginable, i.e. the conditions of perception active in liturgical praxis, especially as they relate to subjective understandings of relationality.

As aforementioned, it is the regular practice of the early medieval church that its members bring to the mass a bread offering, and, if possible, a wine offering.⁵² They are likewise to receive communion if they bother to

⁵⁰ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIIa, Q76.1.

⁵¹ see Chapter 4, n. 20.

⁵² Jungmann, *The Mass*, vol. II, 1-10.

come to church. In one canon set forth by Clement of Rome, ratified in 692 at the Council of Trullo, it states clearly that

All the faithful who come in and hear the Scriptures, but do not stay for the prayers and the Holy Communion, are to be excommunicated, as causing disorder in the Church.⁵³

To participate in the liturgy was to participate fully or not at all, at least as documented in the canons of the church. This required not only attendance, but an oblation and the reception of the consecrated gifts of the Lord's Table. Nevertheless, post-Constantine it becomes increasingly impractical for each person or family to bring a bread and wine offering. This may be why Cyril of Alexandria states that only bread baked in church should be used for Eucharist.⁵⁴ At the Council of Toledo in 693, it is stated in like manner that the only bread that should find its way to the altar is that which has been prepared for this purpose. "Bread should not be placed on the altar to be consecrated if it is not complete, proper and especially made."⁵⁵ This is not so clear as Cyril has it, as there is room to understand this bread to be made by parishioners but for the purpose of oblation, which bears the sacrificial intent noted above. What is evidenced in both instances, however, is that the bread prior to consecration has become more than just bread, for its function has been reoriented to the Eucharist. That is, by its very baking and preparation for Eucharist it is already transformed by its intended termination in Christ. It is not ordinary bread intended to be consumed; rather, it is bread that is *intended to consume*. The sacrality involved here already foreshadows how Aquinas will later articulate intentionality. What is important to point out at this point is how the pre-sanctified gifts introduce an element of purity and begin already to determine whose hands are ontologically competent for preparing and even touching the holy gifts. Whereas bread set apart from the homes of the faithful had previously been enough to transform its telos, it now becomes the case that it must be especially designated prior to its baking. What is evidenced by this new practice is a separation of the Eucharistic bread

⁵³ *The Apostolic Canons*, Canon VIII (NFPF).

⁵⁴ George Galavaris, *Bread and the Liturgy: The Symbolism of Early Christian and Byzantine Bread Stamps* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 44.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

from the ordinary or common bread of the home of the faithful. This subtle division problematizes the gathering of the common into the Holy as an unconfused union. It is not to say that it nullifies this gathering or makes it impossible; this would wrongly construe the capacity of God to transform the ecclesial body. It does, however, alter the Eucharist as a participatory action of a gathered people *with* the sacrifice of the Son to the Father and how grace is now *understood* to be communicated. That is, to cease gathering an oblation for sacrifice by the people changes how God is *perceived* to mediate *his* presence. Phenomenologically, it ceases to be the self-mediation of God; the body and blood are now mediated by one other than the Eternal Son.

While the lay person is continually encouraged to receive Holy Communion, at the same time of the Eucharistic controversies of the ninth century, piety is already shifting liturgical practices of receiving the Eucharist. It is in this same period that the bread of Eucharist is no longer to be placed in the hands of the faithful, but only in their mouths. Only the bishop, presbyters and deacons have the bread placed in their hands,⁵⁶ giving new meaning to the Eucharist's post-consecration announcement: "Holy things for Holy [people]." As canonized at the Synod of Rouen (878), "None are to place the Eucharist in the hands of lay men or women, but only in their mouth."⁵⁷ Again, it is impossible to draw a direct link between what is being argued theologically and the liturgical practices of the time; however, it is important enough to note that the church is in transition and the quarrels over who can touch and receive is taking place along parallel lines. It is also of consequence that during this same period is developed a separate anointing of the priests hands at his ordination.⁵⁸ One formula from the *Missale Francorum* reads as follows:

May these hands be anointed with holy oil and with the chrism of holiness. As Samuel anointed David king and prophet, so may [these hands] be anointed and perfected in the name of God the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit—as we trace upon them the image of the holy cross of our Lord and

⁵⁶ Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 86-87.

⁵⁷ *op. cit.*, Edward Foley, *From Age to Age: How Christians Have Celebrated the Eucharist* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 168.

⁵⁸ Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 88-89.

Savior Jesus Christ, who freed us from death and leads us to the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁹

As Nathan Mitchell notes, it is of further significance that lay reception of communion only in the mouth, not with their hands, occurs in the Gallican territory where this anointing has been introduced. This is also attested to in the sacramentary of the abbey in St. Denis and in the *Liber officialis* of Amalarius of Metz, each in the middle of the ninth century.⁶⁰ The practice of anointing the hands of priests at ordination became common enough that it was wide-spread by the tenth century.⁶¹ The concern for this present investigation, however, is the anointing of hands in relation to the manner of Eucharistic reception and the capacity to prepare bread for offering.

Historically, at least up until the late eighth century, it remains (mostly) common throughout the church that bread is offered by the people, and that the bread is the everyday bread of one's home. It is ordinary bread with an extraordinary purpose. When the transition from Eucharistic bread being produced in the home to being baked within the bread house of a church or monastery, the material elements of the bread are initially the same. In the late eighth century with Alcuin of York, however, there is strong evidence of a shift from leavened bread to unleavened, especially with Alcuin's disciple Rhabanus Maurus, who chides Paschasius for not being forthright enough in insisting upon unleavened bread.⁶² What both Radbertus and Maurus have to say about the leaven, however, is a crucial association that will transform the understanding of the everyday or common, both regarding the lay person and what is made by her hands. The leaven of the bread is compared with the leaven of "*malitiae et nequitiae*" by Radbertus.⁶³ Maurus will cite Levitical law, saying that it should be "*panem sine fermento.*"⁶⁴ Leaven is hereby

⁵⁹ op. cit. Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 88.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 88-89.

⁶¹ Paul F. Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites of the Ancient Churches of East and West* (New York: Pueblo Pub., 1990), 56-70.

⁶² Reginald Maxwell Woolley, *The Bread of the Eucharist*, Alcuin Club Tracts (London: A. R. Mowbray &, 1913), 18-20.

⁶³ Woolley, *The Bread of the Eucharist*, 19.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 20. Interestingly, Jesus uses the word "leaven" to describe the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who live one life before others and another in secret (Luke 12.1-3). "Leaven" denotes an additive that distorts or, and quite literally, puffs up that to which it is added.

linked to wickedness or sin, and the reference to Levitical law is a return to purity. The bread for Eucharist must now be made by pure hands from pure elements. That is, only hands set apart for offering the sacrifice may bake and touch the bread and only the pure elements of life, not the everyday elements of the home, may be used. This theological articulation of the liturgical shift from leaven to unleavened, the bread of the non-cleric (leaven) to the bread of the cleric (unleavened), perpetuates the *fear* that had grown to surround this meal, further alienating the lay person from the relation binding tool of the Eucharist.⁶⁵ The connection between the leaven of malice and the bread of the lay person is made without difficulty, especially with the growing distance between the nave and sanctuary in the architecture of the church. Again, this is a transition from a functional ontology, whereby the material is intimately bound up together with its use and telos, to a substance ontology that separates form, content, and the material each from the other, giving way to truth without contingency or referent of any kind. The cleric, by his ordination and the consecration of his hands, has received special powers, which are even contained in his hands, to which the dirty hands of the laity cannot compare. Baptism no longer serves as a mark of the faithful, in this sense; it is now ordination and the anointing of hands that make one fit to handle Christ. The ancient tradition of ordination, which goes back to the inception of the church, is a designation or setting apart for a particular administration of the ecclesial economy. That is, ordination is for an authorized (ordained) function within the hierarchy of the ecclesia, granting “power” and authority to particular persons (clergy) for the administration of the power and authority given to the church as *the* medium for and manifesting of the glory of the Lord. Apart from the unity of the body in the orchestration of the salvific economy, power and authority become centralized and dominating, and cease to participate in the polyphonic unity of the Holy Trinity. This unity is a power and authority, as shown in chapter two, of mutual submission and shared primacy within the

Perhaps there is an element of “hypocrisy” that is desired to be kept out to the Eucharistic feast, which is accomplished by removing those who live two lives, namely the laity. It does not appear a condemnation of hypocrisy but a general wickedness and sinfulness. The hypocrisy, or more appropriately self-deceit, of the clergy at this time could be said to be the fiction that they hold a separate nature than that of the common, introducing an atomistic human nature, as opposed to a unified nature in Christ.

⁶⁵ Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer*, 243-256. See also Foley, 166-182.

Godhead. To designate an authority within the body that divides the body is to nullify the power and authority it is given to administrate.

Think back to Illich's understanding of a tool and its ability both to extend and limit the range of human freedom. The Eucharist and clerical offices as tools—mediums of the glory of the Lord—become specialized by the liturgical reforms. When unleavened bread is introduced, a further disconnect from the laity and the table occurs, as bread-baking becomes more troublesome, especially as various liturgical acts and prayers begin to accompany the fashioning of this special bread. The Eucharistic bread ceases to be a tool used by the laity, at once the medium/extension of the human and the self-mediation of Christ to the human; rather, the laity, especially with the rise of votive masses, become the tools of the Eucharistic bread, now relating to the bread as spectator, both by its purchase for special intention and as suspended by ocular reception. As in the medicinal tools of modern capitalism, where only few are able to handle certain means for treating illnesses, likewise are the clergy the select few of a specialized class whose sole purpose is to expose the sacrament for a groping laity. Once again, just as there are certain tools—especially as related to medicine—that should be handled by those who are well-trained, likewise should the church have well-trained clergy who preside over Eucharist. This is not the issue. Rather, the issue regards the matter of accessibility to the tools, and whether or not persons have appropriate access to the means of grace.

What the early controversies over the Eucharist show, coupled with the change in ordination practices, is that the mundane has become profane, but in a way that does not seek simply to differentiate that which is set apart; rather, it is to divide clean from unclean. The mundane ceases to bear an innate potency for manifesting God's grandeur, as seen in Maximus Confessor and others before him. What is introduced into liturgical practice with the anointing of clerical hands and the specifications of bread types and preparation for communion is a radical distancing, materially, of sacred and profane, i.e. of sacred and secular. One explicit example of this transition in Eucharistic bread manufacturing is found in *The Monastic Constitutions of*

Lanfranc, where the recipe for bread baking becomes a ritual act in its own right.

It is [the sacrist's] task to prepare the hosts, and he should take every care to ensure that they are perfectly pure and seemly. In the first place, if it be possible, the wheat is to be picked out grain by grain with great care, and then put into a clean sack made of good cloth and prepared and reserved for the purpose; a servant of good character shall carry it to the mill, and there shall see that other corn is ground first, so that that from which the hosts are to be made may be ground without any admixture of dirt. When the flour is brought back the sacrist shall draw a curtain round the place and the vessel in which the flour is to be bolted, and he shall carry out his work in an alb and with an amice over his head. On the day the hosts are to be made, the sacristan and those who help him shall wash their hands and faces before they begin; they shall wear albs and amices, save for the one who is to hold the irons and ministers with them. One shall sprinkle the flour with water as it lies on an absolutely clean table, and shall knead it firmly and press it thin, while the brother who holds the irons in which the wafers are baked shall have his hands covered with gloves. Meanwhile, while the hosts are being made and baked, these brethren shall recite the 'familiar' psalms that go with the hours themselves, or, if they prefer, psalms of equal length taken in order from the psalter. Absolute silence shall be maintained.⁶⁶

Resonances of a spotless lamb for sacrifice are readily noticeable in this recipe for the host bread. There is without a doubt a pietistic concern that prevails and it should not be read in another way. The piety and desire to create a pure vessel for the Holy One is quite prominent. Nevertheless, it is the consequences of this refined bread making that is of concern, not so much the pietistic rationale behind it. The pure bread is an ideological move that

⁶⁶ op. cit. Foley, 168.

consequentially distances the laity—wicked, dirty leaven—further from the *relation-of-participation* in Christ's offering to the Father.

Thus far, it has been shown how the liturgical procession, with the offering of bread and wine, establishes a radically participatory role in the economy of salvation, whereby both clergy and lay person are actively engaged in the sacrificial offering of the Son to the Father, by the power of the Spirit. It has also been shown how various reforms in liturgical practice throughout the medieval era give way to a sharp division between the lay person and the liturgical economy, rendering the lay person's actions inconsequential to the sacrifice of the church, severing the Soul of Christ (sanctuary, clergy) from the Body of Christ (nave, laity). Additionally, the various factors described above have shown how liturgical praxis throughout the late medieval world provides the perceptive conditions to imagine an ontological chasm between the sacred and profane, such that material reality ceases to manifest the grandeur of God through functional use but rather communicates or reveals God substantively by sovereign decree, explicitly by priests, their anointed hands, and the consecration of holy gifts offered by the holy hands of the same priests. In other words, what is evidenced in the nominalism and deism logically constructed in the theology of John Duns Scotus is active and at work in the liturgical practice of late medieval Christendom.

This liturgical distancing of the mundane from the holy of holies, rather than the sacramental gathering of the mundane to intensify its inherent truth as that which manifests the glory of the Lord, is the invocation of the secular human identity—a being who bears no inherent relation to God outside of individual, sovereign choice. Transitions in liturgical practice that bear this invocation are not limited to the Eucharist, however. There are structural mechanisms that fall into place that create the necessary support to ensure these liturgical forms are sustained. It will be explored below how the development of the missal and changes in ordination reinforce this sacred-secular chasm.

III

At the height of liturgical reforms in the ninth and tenth centuries, occurring simultaneously alongside the increasing piety among lay persons, is the compiling of liturgical books into what is now known as the missal. There are a variety of reasons for this transition, not least of which is practical.

Throughout the Carolingian era, there is much transition in liturgical practice and the books needed to do liturgy are incorporated into this reformation. With the rise in ceremonies during this period comes the rise of texts for ceremonials. There are numerous books used for any number of liturgical services that it becomes quite cumbersome to figure out which texts are needed for each liturgy. What is of interest in terms of the growing schism between clergy and laity, however, are the texts used in the everyday liturgy for mass on Sunday. It is also of consequence that these texts are in Latin, and the rise of the vernacular will aid in the division among head and the body of the church, at least throughout much of Christendom.

To have mass on Sunday, unlike it is today with the modern missal, Book of Common Prayer, or projected words on a screen, it was necessary to have the texts that contained all the various parts. Without a printing press, the added difficulty was the costs involved in producing these texts, especially as they accumulate with the growth of commemoration masses or special liturgies. Therefore, it made the most sense to only write in each book that which each person/office needed for the mass. The mass, therefore, is divided into three primary books, none of which contain the texts of the other. The sacramentary, which is the central liturgical book of the ninth century, contained everything a priest needed to perform his duties in liturgy. It would have contained the Collects, Prefaces, and the Canon of the Mass, but it would not have contained any scripture lessons, Introits, Graduals or Offertories.⁶⁷ Other books were produced to account for each of the other parts of the mass, which were used not by priests, but by deacons, subdeacons, the choir, cantors, lectors, and so on. Each office had a particular role, and each office

⁶⁷ Jeanne E. Krochalis and E. Ann Matter, "Manuscripts of the Liturgy" in *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*. Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, ed. (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University Press, 2001), 433-472; See also Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 21-110.

used a particular book. The role of the laity, if they did not hold an official office, was responsory. Texts were not needed for congregants, as they were given cues by each office when to respond and they learned what the responses were either catechetically or through participation in the mass itself. What is chiefly evident with the liturgical books is the fact that the mass, understood to be a whole assemblage of thoughts, words, and deeds that gathered the liturgically body into the drama of God, was a compilation, not simply of books, but of the volitive words and actions of those gathered for liturgy. To do liturgy required each office, each person, each book, and all working harmoniously to gather the whole of the body into the offering of the Son to the Father. To be most clear: a priest could not do mass on his own.

The shape of this liturgical economy is distinctly polyphonic. There are many voices at work; there are many movements occurring simultaneously; it is a mimetic relation of Trinitarian relationality manifest in Jesus the Messiah that this Body of Christ—the Church—is participating in and to which it is eternally being assimilated. The liturgical texts make this polyphonic speech-act possible in new and beautiful ways; however, with growing concern in the manner of non-clerical participation in the liturgy and the decline already in Eucharistic participation, liturgy becomes something that is increasingly relegated to the office of the presiding cleric. In the early ninth century, Theodulph of Orleans proscribes the following rule:

A priest should never celebrate mass alone; for just as it cannot be celebrated without the priest's greeting, so it cannot be celebrated without the people's response. Most certainly, therefore, Mass ought never to be celebrated by one individual alone. For there must be others who stand about with the priest; others whom he may greet; others whom may respond to him.⁶⁸

Among other things, what the *Capitulary* of Theodulph reveals is that there were priests celebrating mass alone, without the aid of any other. By the eleventh century, the liturgical books have evolved and the priests'

⁶⁸ Mansi, XIII: col 996, cited in Mitchell, 104.

sacramentary now contains in or with it the sung pieces and the lectionary readings for the mass. Though the missal had been developing in the monasteries, it arises in large part out of the unsuccessful Constantinian/Gregorian ideal of Charlemagne and Charles the Bald to unite the empire through its worship and the growing pietistic concerns of purity for those who enact and participate in the liturgy. There are a number of practical concerns as well, for instance the Franciscan mission to convert the Germans, which was a liturgically tedious affair. To do mass, the friars had to lug several books around when traveling in order to celebrate the Eucharist outside the monastery. This instance of compiling of the liturgical books into one was a particular missionary need. Likewise, the establishment of parishes further and further away from a cathedral made it continually difficult to fill the offices of lector, deacon, sub-deacon, choir, etc. These varying factors seemed to place a greater stress on the cleric, whose new elevated role, even perhaps isolating role, in the liturgy becomes the genesis of the missal. By the eleventh century, the celebrant was obliged to recite each sung part and each lectionary reading of the mass, at least in a low voice, even though the choir, deacons and subdeacons are still fulfilling each of these roles.⁶⁹ It is here that anything not said or done by the priest becomes superfluous, mere pietistic devotions that bear solely upon the sentimentality of the laity. What is truly done is done by the priest. All else is a matter of individual piety.

The fault-line between clergy and laity only opens further following the Eucharistic controversies of the ninth century. The importance of what takes place in liturgy is consistently placed, not upon the action of the gathered body and each person fulfilling their liturgical role within the whole of the liturgical drama in its mimetic relation to the Liturgy-Christ, but upon the confecting powers of the priest and his anointed hands. There is a regression to the priesthood of the Jewish Temple, whose economic tables Jesus turned on their heads, whereby a divine power or substance is mediated by a priest over against the manifesting of human nature as assimilated and sustained by participation in the singular offering of the Son to the Father. The removal of all but clergy from a role and function within liturgy

⁶⁹ Palazzo, 107.

establishes an ecclesiology likened to a capitalist market, especially when it becomes evident that the offerings of the people after the seventh century are largely monetary.⁷⁰ Jungmann is quick to point out that these monetary gifts by the laity remain gifts given to God, not simply to be understood as money given to clergy for their daily sustenance.⁷¹ Nevertheless, with the ability to “say mass” for the sake of a special need or loved one who has died, the whole posture of the lay person in relation to the liturgical action is transformed and all but eliminated. The above emphasis on the relation between the bread/wine offering and the offerer in no way suggests that the monetary offerings of individuals are abstract or philanthropic donations; rather, it is to underscore the material relation of the human as a granule that is gathered together as Eucharist with Christ in the offering to the Father and the receiving of oneself recapitulated in Christ as God’s deifying reciprocity.⁷² The very nature of bread and its use in the human home and its eschatological function in the Lord’s Supper is a bond with no replaceable alternative. Money is not transubstantiated in the Eucharistic feast! Once again, this is not to take away from the sacrificial importance of tithing; it is to ensure that tithes and offering are not confused or deemed synonymous.

As shown in the first chapter of this work, the understanding of an oblation and sacrifice for the church has been contextualized by the ancient Hebrew sacrificial system. The Hebrew understanding of sacrifice, unlike that of the ancient Greeks, were offerings of thanksgiving for something God had done, given, or would be doing or giving that God had promised, or a reparation for sin by a person or people. The rise of private masses of special intentions in the ninth century, however, building on a priest’s ability to say mass by himself, changes the nature of the sacrifice altogether, at least in many if not most instances. These private masses were masses said by priests alone, purchased beforehand by lay persons for the sake of gaining God’s support, whether in this life or the next.⁷³ The mass begins to look more like

⁷⁰ M. Francis Mannion, “Stipends and Eucharistic Praxis,” in *Living Bread, Saving Cup*, Seasoltz, Kevin R, ed. (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 324-346.

⁷¹ Jungmann, *The Mass*, vol. II, 25.

⁷² Colm Luibhéid and Paul Rorem, trans., *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 209-210.

⁷³ Mannion, 324-346.

the sacrifices of the ancient Greeks to the gods, whereby an offering is made with the expectation of a favorable return. The priest has the power to call down the beneficence of heaven, both of which are now purchasable. Additionally, throughout the twelfth century the rationale behind ordination to the priesthood has been altered by this growing votive mass economy. No longer is a priest ordained because of a pastoral need for those who attend mass on Sunday and receive care otherwise. Rather, ordination to the priesthood is contingent upon one's ability to earn a living, primarily by celebrating masses of special intent throughout the day, generally in a side chapel of a cathedral or abbey. The sense of the liturgy as a communal action had become quite tenuous. Increasingly, the Eucharist is separated from Sunday, the day of resurrection, objectified as a substantive power in its own right apart from the liturgical action of Christ's gathered body.⁷⁴

The transformation of liturgical practice carried in the compilation of the liturgical books further shows the radical distancing of the commoner from any sense of a contingent *relation-of-participation*. There remains a strongly felt need for liturgy to be done on one's behalf; however, one's being is no longer a matter of participation in the liturgical action proper. This alienation from the liturgical action, as shown in the last chapter, is the alienation of the human from the movements that manifest one's contingent relation on the Liturgy-Christ.

Before going any further, it is important to stop and clarify again what is not being said. Late medieval society is a complex matter, and it is impossible to impose upon medieval subjects a historicity to which they are not privileged and for which they cannot answer. It is easy to step outside of time and see the unfolding events of history and assume the people of the late medieval world, or any period of time for that matter, were aware of what they were unaware. This, however, would be a great injustice to the whole of the medieval customs and norms, which were far more complex than is often credited. For the modern viewer, situated in the twenty-first century in a time when the church and state are governed separately and do not interact economically, at least throughout most of the world, to unpack the above

⁷⁴ Jungmann, *The Mass*, vol. II, 25.

unfolding developments in liturgy can only incite indignation and concern, smelling of what the Reformers called “papist.” What needs to be on the table, however, is that indignation is likely to be the furthest thought from the medieval mind. Liturgy throughout medieval Christendom is something woven into the fabric of society; it is a social ritual that reaches well beyond the confines of the liturgy proper.⁷⁵ Late medieval society is a society of reciprocity, and is to such a large extent that even the living and the dead are but two distinct aspects of a single whole.⁷⁶ The rationale behind offering prayers for the dead, intercessory prayers for friends and kin, or having special masses said for others, is understood as the actions of the beneficiary named. Gabriel Biel speaks of this in soteriological terms.

The suffrages which are made for the living and the dead can be said to be the works of those for whom they are done... For the work is appropriate to [the recipient] (i) by the intention of him who does it, and (ii) because that which is his who is one with me, is in a certain sense also mine. Whence it is not against divine justice if one man receives the fruits of works done by another who is one with him in charity, particularly when they are done specifically on his behalf.⁷⁷

What this helps to contextualize is the dynamism of the liturgical action as the very soul of medieval society that truly animates the social body, not as a conglomerate of isolated sovereign wills, but as an organic, liturgical web of persons whose union was assumed and reciprocated rather than contracted. In a society ordered by guild systems, which are themselves liturgical by nature, the church had become the power source that made sense of the medieval, social body. To emphasize the division between clergy and lay persons at this time must be understood within this system of relations, for as John Bossy rightly emphasizes, this division was not as explicit or “felt” as it may have seemed. What I am attempting to show is not a simple clericalism gone awry, but to show how the above reforms in liturgical praxis not only transform the

⁷⁵ John Bossy, “The Mass As A Social Institution 1200-1700,” *Past and Present* 100, no. 1 (1983), doi:10.1093/past/100.1.29.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ op. cit. Bossy, *The Mass*, 43.

roles and relations of clergy and laity, but actually create an enclosure of power that spatializes time and temporalizes space, such that a contingent, participatory relation to God in absolute reciprocity of Being becomes unimaginable.

IV

The complexity of the social body in medieval society is a web of reciprocal relations between persons and communities that is not easily deciphered or mapped in modern terms. In the modern secular world the apparent divide between the sacred and secular makes it difficult to see the intricate union between the two in the medieval world. The divide did not exist in any formal sense nor in a way that could be articulated or understandable to the medieval mind. To use the word secular would only describe the sacred outside the religious (monastic) community. The secular was the sacred of the common, differentiated only by a vow of monastic orders and those who had not taken such a vow. Even this differentiation is inconclusive, as some religious orders did not involve or necessitate a life-long vow to the religious community itself. What needs to be clear in the argument I am making is that the sacred-secular divide is not a simple X caused Y and begat Z. Rather, what I have argued is that medieval liturgical practices, primarily in their ninth through thirteenth century developments, inadvertently alienate lay men and women from the active manifesting of his or her true self as a participant in Divine Being—secular autonomy. This is not to say that the medieval Christian felt a radical distance from God or anyone else, as lay piety throughout the medieval world only show signs of increase. As Catherine Pickstock has convincingly shown, the complexity of medieval rituals and charitable institutions made possible a fusion of love and power by a liturgical foundation.⁷⁸ Such a liturgical fusion of love and power, because it was the Host that guaranteed the reality of the Body of Christ, refused abstraction or a *Pax* that did not entail reconciliation.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the separability of the liturgical mystery of making and being made Eucharist from the tangible synaxis of this body

⁷⁸ Pickstock, 157.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 158.

made Eucharist is the primary condition of possibility latent in the extraction of the laity from their being-gathered into liturgical procession and return. Rather than Christ himself as mediator and medium in, by, and through the mystery of the sacrament, it is the priest who mediates and receives vicariously *for* all Christians.⁸⁰ Because the non-cleric is unable to participate materially and actively in the sacrificial oblation of the altar on earth, which is gathered and assimilated to the altar in heaven, and because the reciprocal return of the oblation by God who mediates *himself* under the Eucharistic species is received vicariously by priests, the reciprocal relation between the ecclesial body and the Eucharistic body occurs only within the holy of holies, by holy words and holy hands, *on behalf of*, but not with, the common among the faithful.

The spatialization of the Eucharistic presence in the host, both in its theological articulation beginning with the *Corpus* of Paschasius Radbertus in the ninth century and in the isolated speech-acts of the medieval liturgies, seals the fictional divide between sacred and profane, which again is a theology that runs in tandem with the practice of compartmentalizing the sacred by the holy words and hands of the priest. It is a phenomenological construal of action that gives way to an ontological chasm and eventually to the epistemological event of being for the Reformers.

The liturgical practice of the late medieval church, whereby the laity cease to participate reciprocally in the sacrifice of the mass, gives way to an understanding of the Eucharist that separates the *action* of the mystery from the *sacrament* of mystery.⁸¹ In the late twelfth century, Peter the Chanter is able to claim for the first time that the accidents of bread and wine have nothing to do with the Eucharistic substance.⁸² William of St. Thierry will likewise press for a “spiritual” reception of the Eucharist.⁸³ The separation of the sacramental substance from the material elements of bread and wine enters

⁸⁰ Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 50.

⁸¹ Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 37-54.

⁸² “Quinimmo, cum panis naturaliter sit confortatius et uinum exhilaratium, hec uidentur etiam post transsubstantiationem remansisse... et sicut accidentia exteriora... dicuntur a mutlis in nullo esse subiecto,” Peter the Chanter, *Summa de sacramentis* I, c. 55, p. 134, op cit., Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 52.

⁸³ Rubin, 52.

theological articulation in large part, if not solely, as a justification for ocular reception of the Eucharist. Ocular reception of the Eucharist is the primary means of lay reception in the late medieval world.⁸⁴ Indeed, the high point of medieval liturgy was seeing the consecrated Host.⁸⁵ Only at Easter would lay persons receive the host. Spiritual reception, therefore, was the primary means of communication for the lay person through the mediation of the priest.

This is no less true with Aquinas in the middle of the thirteenth century; however, with Aquinas, even though ocular reception remains sufficient, there is no division between the substance and the accidents. Following John of Damascus, Aquinas shows that the human can only receive and comprehend God under a veil.⁸⁶ Ocular reception is possible, according to Aquinas, not because the spiritual substance of Christ's body and blood are separable from the accidents of the bread and wine; rather, it is possible because Christ is really present in the bread and wine visible to those at mass, not in an instrumental way as with the other sacraments, but substantively present, manifesting the glory of divinity that permeates created life by a participation in Christ's own priesthood.⁸⁷ It is the participatory nature of the mystery of Christ's incarnation veiled under the Eucharistic species that makes ocular reception possible, and proportionately so.⁸⁸ For Aquinas, the primary participation in the Eucharist is the cultivation of *votum*—desire, the liturgical community of intention, the Church.⁸⁹ *Votum* in Aquinas cannot be reduced to mere affect, however; it is, rather, to participate in that which one has become a *devote*, as shown in the previous chapter. The Church as a community that intends the communion of its people with Christ, graciously given by Christ and completed by gracious condescension, is the only ecclesiology that could possibly sustain any sense of a “spiritual reception” of

⁸⁴ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 95-107.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁸⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, Q61.A1; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, IV, 56.

⁸⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, Q65.A3.

⁸⁸ Lubac, 252.

⁸⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, Q73.A.4. See also Pickstock, C. (1999), Thomas Aquinas and the Quest for the Eucharist. *Modern Theology*, 15: 159–180. doi: 10.1111/1468-0025.00092.

the Eucharist, one that even so must occur under the veil of bread and wine as made-manifest in, by, and through the Church. Aquinas refuses any divisibility of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the action of its mysterious participation in the incarnation, and the whole of the ecclesial body. To desire Christ and commune with him is always an ecclesial action and never an action of the individual. It is within these parameters that medieval festivals, such as Corpus Christi, *can* be understood as sustaining the participatory ontology of the liturgy. Nevertheless, while such a festival of the social body brings to a whole otherwise disparate parts, even in the context of Eucharistic presence,⁹⁰ it nevertheless does so by electrifying a Eucharistic piety that has been rising since the inception of the church. The problem with liturgical practice surrounding the Eucharist in the late medieval world, however, is exactly the instrumentalism that Aquinas renounces. Theologically, Aquinas is able to hold together this liturgical tension in the midst of a waning Eucharistic participation that has been supplemented by pietistic autonomy; however, this balance would end with him, and the force of late medieval liturgical praxis would complement, if not make possible altogether, the severing of body and soul, and God and creation by Scotus.

If Henri de Lubac is right, then Eucharistic realism and ecclesial realism are inseparable; each confirm the other, and the faithful of the ecclesia are only united together as one body because the Eucharist is united to them.⁹¹ The architecture of the ecclesial body, therefore, must entail the liturgical construction of a social reality whereby otherwise disparate bodies (human individuals) continuously create and bear within their bodies the reality of Eucharistic reciprocity. The Reformers saw the great need for this reconstruction of the ecclesial body; however, the liturgical spatialization had so grasped the late medieval imagination that they were incapable of doing what needed to be done. In their valiant efforts to reform the church, they ironically formalized the division between the incarnate mystery of Christ's self-mediation and the manifesting action of the social body, not by putting the Eucharist back in the "dirty hands" of the laity which many rightly saw to be

⁹⁰ John Bossy, *Christianity in the West: 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 64-72.

⁹¹ Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 252.

the downfall of the late medieval church, but by so doing over against the tangible reality of the ecclesial body becoming Christ through Eucharistic manifesting. In reaction, the Reformers posited an “either/or” relation between the church in its visible and invisible realities.⁹² The ecclesial community hereby came to be understood not as the manifestation in likeness to the image of its materially present Lord, Christ, but as a sign of an eschatological kingdom wholly other and separate from it. Image and likeness, once differentiated parts of the assimilated whole recapitulated in Christ, had now become impossible relations. Liturgy was slowly transformed into abstract time and space within which the moment of Christ’s presence occurred, rather than the creating, and therefore inhabiting, of time and space by the actions of a gathered body of Christ, the Church.

The movement of liturgy hereby ceases to be an end in itself, and the spatialization of the Eucharistic power to the sanctuary of the church and its priests serve to distance sacred from profane—soul from body, creating a dichotomy that heretofore did not exist in any formal sense, giving rise to a secular human imaginary that posits an absolute gulf between God and creation, whereby the distance is bridged only as momentary events of sovereign choosing that do not necessarily cohere. It is true that the Eucharist had achieved an exceedingly strong emphasis in late medieval society, but once again, the material elements no longer consisted of the common, making common-union (communion) increasingly difficult to *perceive*. The horizons of perception distanced the Eucharist from any sense of a “common-union.” What is being enacted and transmitted in late medieval liturgy and the Eucharistic elements proper, having ceased to be an *action* to gather and create the church as polis, is a territorialization of the sacred—and, therefore, the secular—that serve only to alienate the human from any awareness that she in her commonness or “raw” humanity bears an inherent telos as a manifesting agent of divine glory. That is, a participant in Being/God by virtue of her existence and nature. Separating act and being in this manner—soul (*anima*)

⁹² Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, tr. Michael B. Smith, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992, 82-85.

and body (*corpus*)⁹³—leaves the Cartesian *Cogito* only waiting to be named.⁹⁴ The manufactured nature of the Eucharist had lost its analogous relation to the Liturgy-Christ—the gathering of creation and assimilation to himself as a single offering to the Father, and had become a purchasable, controlled substance that could be carried around the city for special observance, blessings, or protection.⁹⁵ In other words, by clericalizing the liturgy, the Eucharist becomes a centralized power source bound neither to the day of resurrection nor the common of the people.

Conclusion

The liturgies of the church throughout antiquity and the early medieval era evidence a distinct form of participation in the death and resurrection of Christ that seeks to charge human sensibilities in such a way that each person's movement within the liturgical action manifests their *being-in-participation*. It is impossible and wrongheaded to idealize the liturgies of the early church, just as it is likewise insufficient to denounce wholly the liturgies of late medieval Christendom. What is evidenced in the above investigation, however, is the series of liturgical transformations that nonetheless, even if accidentally, serve to alienate the human subject from a manifesting awareness of her contingent relation to the reciprocal life of the Holy Trinity. The human loses her inherent glory as the *imago Dei*, and ceases to bear any likeness to this image by her alienation from the actions of liturgy that constitute this same likeness. The image-likeness distinction becomes an image-likeness division, such that the image has been so tainted by the leaven of sin that likeness to this image is only available by divine fiat. One can see foreshadowed in this the doctrine of total depravity, which gives rise to various atonement theories, even to the extent that God hides human sin behind Christ. As seen with Duns Scotus, these questions of will and

⁹³ The *corpus* ceases to be animated by anything other than itself; the soul, once the animator of the body, becomes abstracted from the body, giving way to a form-content division. Wittgenstein's claim that the body is the perfect image of the soul would have held true in the ancient world; however, in late medieval liturgical praxis this claim becomes tenuous.

⁹⁴ Pickstock, 46-61.

⁹⁵ See Mitchell, especially 44-128.

depravity are imaginable through a liturgical alienation of the human from her participation in the act-being of God—*Christ the Liturgy*.

What also becomes clear in this restructuring is that the assimilation of the individual human to Christ through liturgical habituation—the volitive assimilation in likeness to the eternal assimilation of Christ of which the human is an image, by ceasing to be available as a participatory act but now as a purchasable good, suspends the relation of each to the other. What the liturgy accomplished, among other things, for human society throughout the medieval world was a bounded union. Each person related to the other, not as individual sovereign choosers but as Christians yoked together by each's assimilation to the offering of the Son to the Father. Assimilated to the offering of the Son, the individual ceases to know herself as individual but as one with the body in each's exclusive relation to God. Again, as aforesaid, this exclusive relation is inherently social but only inasmuch as each one participates in her assimilation—the social as a consequence of one's exclusive relation to Christ. Without the capacity to know this assimilation, the social body remains open to fragmentation. As Charles Taylor has argued, human identity as social depends upon a shared agency.⁹⁶ Likewise, any sense of human society in its contingent relation to God depends on the shared action of the church's liturgy. Human identity is carried in social praxis, for human understanding is always embodied and no one can escape their environment.⁹⁷ The breakdown of the liturgical economy as a social action, having become the action of clergy only, is that which gives way to the secular imaginary, which is to say that the articulable “death of God” is possible only when God has been removed from the body. The alienation of the laity is that which separates the soul from the body, except perhaps for clergy, emperor-king and aristocracy. It is hereby that late medieval liturgical reforms give way to the secular imaginary, a bodily comportment that bears no contingent

⁹⁶ Charles Taylor, “To Follow a Rule...” in *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Craig Clahoun, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 45-59. This is perhaps better articulated no where besides in Paul Holmer's *The Grammar of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), especially 111-135. Holmer argues that the conceptual meaning of language is achieved from within the community of understanding, be it religion, philosophy or science; this renders singularity of meaning implausible and always conditioned by the speaking community who enacts its language.

⁹⁷ Taylor, *To Follow a Rule...*, 45-59.

relation to God as Being qua Being. The liturgical practices of the church were only waiting for Scotus and others to theorize and give them force, which had the paradoxical outcome of birthing the very society the church sought to fend off. By the time of the Reformation, Luther and others, perhaps even more accidentally, sever the remaining cartilage left dangling and hand the body over to the state.

The creation of the secular did not perhaps arrive prior to the seventeenth century with Galileo's telescope and Descartes *Cogito*; nevertheless, the architecture of secular society becomes imaginable long before by the alienation of the common from the sacred. In its attempts to preserve the holy from the profane, the liturgical reforms of late medieval Christendom have the ironic effect of quarantining not only God from the body polis but God from creation altogether, rendering Being abstract, as seen with the time and space of capitalism, only to relate to God as sovereign equal. Liturgy ceases to be both the extension of God and of humanity—the active body as a tool for manifesting the grandeur of God, whereby each relate to the other in a *relation-of-participation* by bodily comportment, and became a “voluntary,” unilateral relation purchased by individuals, with the promise of eternal returns.

Modern forms of liturgical practice often fall prey to this same voluntarism, primarily due to an epistemological prioritization over against ontology. What is needed at this juncture, in the midst of the current secular age, is the liturgical reform that never happened. That is, what is needed are liturgies that bear a distinct participatory relation to the Liturgy-Christ, in all differentiated unity, which constitute and reconstitute the human as *homo-liturgicus*, whereby all human action is intelligible only in its contingent relation of participation to the liturgy of the church that assimilates in likeness what God in Christ has assimilated in truth.

Conclusion

“Only he lives fully who is capable of labor and who actually engages in labor.”

—*Sergei Bulgakov*

“One truly knows only what one can create.”

—*Giambattista Vico*

The most fundamental Christian conviction is that the Triune God revealed in the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, is the creator and redeemer of the universe and all that is therein. How this has been related to succeeding generations since the inception of the church has not been through systems of ideas, nor even ecclesiastical councils, as important as these have been throughout the history of the one holy catholic and apostolic church. Rather, the transmission of this distinctive participatory relation of the human to her Creator has been mediated through the everyday staples of life—bread, wine and water, and all the liturgical movements surrounding their communication. For the Creator to create is hereby understood as a transmission. That is, the Creator, by his act of creating, endows the created with his Spirit. This endowment is not understood as inert or as separable from God; rather, it is inherently relational and is dynamically conditioned for deification through gratuitous condensation by God in the Eucharist, which begets the mutual indwelling of which the apostle Paul speaks. This consumptive reality is not to be understood as a spatialized power source, however; rather, as Henri de Lubac has convincingly shown it is to fully appreciate the inseparability of the trinity of Christ’s *bodies*: historical, sacramental and ecclesial. It is the person of Christ—incarnate, died, resurrected and ascended, who inhabits the bread and wine that makes the church, wherefrom the Christian goes forth to inhabit the

world as an extension of this inseparable, though differentiated, historical, sacramental and ecclesial body. Liturgy as the extending of Christ's body is crucial to the meaning of this word. The agency of Christ in the liturgical action that gathers the human to gather creation into the divine economy is a kind of centripetal force, which makes of the human an assimilating tool who mediates both God to the world and the world to God. No where is this more intensely available to the senses than through the offertory rite, which is to be the procession of the human to the altar of God for the continual remembering of the individual bodies of the faithful to Christ, who is himself offerer and offering, uniting the individual bodies together as a single body-offering with the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to the Father. Just as a tool is an extension of the human, which binds together the artisan and her art, likewise does the human become a tool of God for the reconciling of the world to himself.

There is, therefore, no autonomy in Christ. This centripetal movement of the liturgical action comports the human body to know in very particular ways. It is a knowledge that, while not *caused* by the liturgical act of making Eucharist, is conditioned (or opened) by the movements that member the human to the self-knowing of the Trinity in the Spirit's return to the Father through the self-offering of the Son. This is analogous to Aristotle's understanding of God's self-knowledge.

For the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality;
and God's essential actuality is life most good and eternal. We
say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so
that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for
this *is* God.... Therefore it must be itself that thought thinks,
and its thinking is a thinking on thinking.¹

Aristotle articulates in similar fashion, though with obviously differing insights, what Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus Confessor express in relation to how the human manifests the divine nature through ascetic discipline. God *knows*, and to say that God knows is to say that the eternal act of divine self-knowing is who God is. God is his own object of thought, which is to say that

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII.7.25-30, 9.30-35.

God knows all other things in relation to God's own inner-movement of self-objectifying thought. Aristotle obviously does not relate this to Jesus of Nazareth, but what the theologians in the early and medieval world were intent to relate together is this very self-knowledge of God and the human as part of God's own self-knowing. Human knowing is hereby a participation in God's own self-knowledge. For Aristotle this is the privileged position of the human, who in transcending herself encounters an inner portion of the divine whereby the human gains awareness of herself *as* divine, coming face to face with knowing herself only in relation to God's own self-knowledge. This knowing is not accidental. It is first and foremost the supreme desire of the human, the very essence of what it means to be human.² Understanding this essential nature of the self is to understand all knowing as participation and self-knowledge as bound together with and made possible by God's own self-knowing. Aristotle will not separate this knowledge from the form of knowing, in particular the form of knowing made possible by virtuous habituation. Likewise, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus Confessor, and the vast majority of early and medieval theologians with them, will refine this virtuous habituation as available only through the human's participation in the liturgical actions of the Church. Only through the sacramental life of the ecclesial body does the human manifest herself as a portion of the Transcendent, capable through liturgical formation of knowing herself in being known by God's knowing himself within her as a portion of his own self-objectivity. Following Aristotle, God can only think himself; for, if God can only think that which is best then God can only think himself, lest thought extend to that which is not himself making that object best and, therefore, God.³ With and beyond Aristotle, the early fathers, perhaps none better than John Damascene, carry forward this inherent dignity of human nature as a portion of divine thought that penetrates the human to know as she is known within God's own being-known. What cannot be overlooked, however, is that an awareness of the self as part of God's own self-knowledge comes through and only through the liturgical habitus of the Church.

² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.1.1.

³ *Ibid.*, XII.7.15-25.

This habitus—the structuring structure of the human imaginary—is what liturgy is and does. It is how the early and medieval church understood the participatory nature of this action and how it effects human knowing, especially as it regards self-knowing as dynamically contingent upon God's own self-knowledge. As liturgy increasingly becomes the soul of society throughout the medieval world, it is easy to see how this must have worked on the human imaginary. However, by this same measure it is likewise to be made clear, as shown above, that the availability of this formative awareness becomes centralized and spatialized in such a way that disconnects the human from knowing herself in this contingent, mediated relation. That is, the non-cleric ceases to be an extension of divine self-knowing, gathering the whole of creation into the being-known of God, becoming the external object of divine grace, rather than one in the self-objective gnosis of God. By ceasing to participate materially in the labor of the liturgical economy, even though remaining a recipient of its benefits and grace, the perceptive capacity of the non-cleric is moved toward an externalized, mutually objectifying relation to God. God remains the object of worship, while the human remains the object of God's love; however, no longer is this objectivity located within the self-contingent, reciprocating force of the divine economy. God and the human become external, non-permeable identities who relate to one another as absolutely other, unilaterally and by sheer act of will. This impenetrable relation is the logic of the late medieval liturgical economy, spatializing divine grace in such a way that sharply divides sacred and profane.

How this economic structuring in the liturgy works on the human imaginary cannot be over emphasized. It is one's primary social structure that construes the imagination, which always stands in some relation to all other structuring structures of the social body or bodies one inhabits. Despite what we might think or believe, we are affective creatures and we are continually affected by the disciplines of society, which move us in directions we “naturally” choose because we are so moved. Any liturgical action must, then, appreciate and account for this formative nature of human perceiving. It is to recognize that the material involvement (or lack of involvement) by the faithful in the liturgical economy will condition how they perceive their

relation to God and, therefore, what it means to be human. For instance, it is difficult (if not impossible) to perceive oneself lying upon the altar as bread to become one with the Son in his offering to the Father—transformed in the Eucharistic species to be returned to oneself recapitulated in Christ through the bread and wine thereby made to dwell in Christ as he dwells in the faithful, if one never participates in the preparatory acts of baking bread, walking in procession, or a whole host of other actions involved in making Eucharist. When Paul says in his letter to the Philippians that he desires to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, Paul is keenly aware that to know this Christ is to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death.⁴ It is to know by following. Liturgy is hereby *the* acoluthetic reasoning, the way of Christological reason.⁵ It is the conditions for inhabiting the world, as James K. A. Smith puts it, “with a certain lightness of being.” It is Christ walking on water; it is St. Francis not permitting the grass to grow under his feet. Liturgy is the *how* that denies separation from the *what*, the action that gives way to this *what*—Christ. To divorce liturgical movements from the subject is to divorce the human from her telos, rendering the human impotent of knowledge. When Alasdair MacIntyre calls for a new St. Benedict at the close of “After Virtue,” it is the mimetic relation to inhabited reason-by-following to which he refers. To recapture the union of sacred and secular there must be a return to being as *analogia entis*—the Liturgy-Christ.

Knowledge is hereby context-determined.⁶ To speak, then, of liturgy as the “work of the people” is to divorce the action of liturgy from the act-being of God in Christ; it is to separate human liturgical action from the contextually determined reality *in Christo*. What occurs in late medieval liturgical reforms is a gradual bifurcation of the non-cleric from the movements of the liturgical action. What happens in the late nineteenth century is a reaction against this binary division, which only extends the logic of the late medieval liturgy by an Enlightenment articulation of Christian worship incapable of making sense of words that have lost their meaning because they are no longer part of the very

⁴ *Philippians* 3.10.

⁵ See Introduction, n. 2.

⁶ Paul L. Holmer, *The Grammar of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), 186.

dispositions of the faithful. MacIntyre may be right, but this new Benedict is only imaginable within a liturgically constituted community whereby the faithful are acolythetically conditioned to perceive all things, especially themselves, in their contingent and participatory relation to Christ, by becoming like him in, by and through his Liturgy.

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