

## THE MANIFOLD PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE LITURGY

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*[Editor's note: The doctrine of Christ's manifold presence in the liturgy, found in Vatican II's Sacrosanctum concilium no. 7, has a complex history. It entered the official magisterium after the council, especially as reformulated by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical Mysterium fidei, but has had seemingly little recent impact. The author gives an overview of its development, surveys its presence in recent eucharistic theology, and offers some reflections on its central importance.]*

THE THEME OF "presence" has been important in Roman Catholic eucharistic theology, sometimes almost crowding other themes from consideration.<sup>1</sup> Cesare Giraudo has published an interesting survey of the treatment of the major themes relating to eucharistic theology in the manuals of theology over the last several centuries.<sup>2</sup> According to his analysis, the discussion of the eucharistic presence often occupies two-thirds to three-fourths of the total space devoted to the Eucharist.

It was no surprise then that the bishops at Vatican II took up the theme of presence in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*.<sup>3</sup> What may have been surprising is the way in which the council treated the topic, not simply as "real presence" but as presence in a variety of modes. Describing presence in a manifold way, however, had been prepared by Pope Pius XII in his 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei*. How this teaching on the presence of Christ came to be

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<sup>1</sup> This study is based on my Henni Lecture at Saint Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, delivered on September 2, 1997. My thanks to the seminary faculty, administration, and students for the opportunity to share these reflections with them.

<sup>2</sup> *Eucaristia per la Chiesa: Prospettive teologiche sull'eucaristia a partire dalla "lex orandi,"* Aloisiana 22 (Rome: Gregorian University, 1989) 4–6.

<sup>3</sup> *Acta apostolicae sedis* 56 (1964) 97–138. I cite the English translation from *Documents on the Liturgy 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1982).

incorporated into the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy is complex. The conciliar doctrine and its subsequent acceptance into the papal magisterium and contemporary eucharistic theology is the focus of this article.

My purpose here is threefold: first, to explore the origins, development, and appropriation of the doctrine of the manifold presence of Christ in Vatican II and in subsequent papal and curial documents; second, to analyze the use of this eucharistic theology in three authors from the period immediately following the council (Edward Schillebeeckx, Joseph Powers, and Alexander Gerken) as well as in three recent authors (David Power, Robert Sokolowski, and Raymond Moloney); and third, to offer some observations and pose some questions about the significance of the doctrine in recent theological reflection on the Eucharist.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE CONCILIAR TEACHING

The teaching of Christ's manifold presence in the liturgy is found in *Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 7. My interest focuses on the first part of that section and particularly on its context. The constitution was the first document debated and subsequently promulgated by the bishops at Vatican II. It begins with four numbers that formulate the overall agenda of the council: to invigorate the lives of the faithful, to adapt the Church to the times, to promote Christian unity, and to reach out to the whole world. The liturgy is a preeminent way to accomplish these goals. The constitution then introduces its theological argument. God's plan for the world is fulfilled in Christ. Christ in turn sent the apostles to preach the good news and to baptize those who believe. The Church celebrates Christ's paschal mystery through the power of the Holy Spirit. The text (no. 7) then elaborates on five ways that Christ is present:

To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present to his Church, especially in its liturgical celebrations. [1] He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of his minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross" [Council of Trent, sess. 22, 17 Sept. 1562, *Doctr. De ss. Missae sacrif.* cap 2: CT 8, *Actorum* pt. 5, 960], [2] but especially under the eucharistic elements. [3] By his power he is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ himself who baptizes [see Augustine, *In Ioannis Evangelium Tractatus* 6, cp. 1, n. 7: PL 35, 1428]. [4] He is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church. [5] He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for he promised: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" [Mt. 18:20].<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Edward Kilmartin will serve as a partial guide in this last section; his own work on the Eucharist was sadly interrupted by his death in 1996. Also I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Douglas Clark, Andrew Nelson, David Stosur, and Stephen Lampe.

<sup>5</sup> *Documents on the Liturgy* 1:7. The numbering system I use and insert between

God's plan in Christ is now fulfilled in the Church, Christ's own body, to which Christ the head is present in a variety of ways. I call attention to the order in which the modes of Christ's presence are here presented, indicated by the bracketed numbers: [1] in the sacrifice of the Mass; [2] especially in the eucharistic species; [3] in the celebration of the sacraments; [4] in the word; and [5] in the assembly gathered to pray and sing. This teaching, and the whole Constitution, which seemed to burst forth upon the Church unawares, actually had a complex history.

### *The Preconciliar and Conciliar Period*

Four preliminary proposals for the constitution had been sketched that led to two draft schemas, the second of which was distributed to the Council Fathers in July 1962.<sup>6</sup> I cite the pertinent passage from the second schema:

3. To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present to his Church, especially in its liturgical actions, he who promised: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" [Mt. 18:20]. It is he himself who speaks when the words of holy Scriptures are read and explained in the Church; who unceasingly renders praise to God the Father; who continues the work of salvation, which he had accomplished while on earth, in the Sacraments; and now offers himself in the Sacrifice of the Mass "through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross" [Council of Trent, sess. 22, 17 Sept. 1562, Doctr. *De ss. Missae sacrif.* cap 2: CT 8, *Actorum* pt. 5, 960].<sup>7</sup>

Several things are worth noting when comparing the text of the schema to that of the final draft. First, the order in which the modes of presence are presented is ascending (compared to the descending order in *Sacrosanctum concilium*). The schema begins with the presence of Christ in the praying community, then continues with his presence in the word, in the prayer of praise (in the Liturgy of the Hours?), in the sacraments, and finally in the celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass. This can be illustrated schematically as follows:

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brackets to analyze the order of the various kinds of presence is one that I have adapted from Douglas Clark's "The Presences of Christ," unpublished study paper, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> See the history in Franziskus Eisenbach, *Die Gegenwart Jesu Christi in Gottesdienst: Systematische Studien zur Liturgiekonstitution des II. vatikanischen Konzils* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald, 1982) 152–67. Edward Kilmartin gives an analysis in *Christian Liturgy 1: Theology* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1988) 305–12. His second, posthumous volume will be published shortly: Edward Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly, S.J. (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1998). See also Carmina M. Magnusen Chapp, *Encounter with the Triune God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J.* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars, 1988) as well as the biography and bibliography, Michael A. Fahey, "In Memoriam: Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J., 1923–1994," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 61 (1995) 1–31.

<sup>7</sup> *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, I,1 (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglott, 1970) 262–303, at 265; the translation is mine.

Schema	<i>Sacrosanctum concilium</i>
[5] in the assembly gathered to pray and sing	[1] in the action of the priest at Mass
[4] in the word and its explanation	[2] in the eucharistic elements
[a] in the praise of the church (Divine Office)	[3] in the sacraments
[3] in the sacraments	[4] in the word
[1] in the action of the priest at Mass	[5] in the assembly gathered for prayer and song

Second, the presence of Christ in the proclamation of the word is expanded by including in its explanation his presence. And third, there is no explicit reference to the presence of Christ in the eucharistic species.

The conciliar debate had focused on four points: the need to mention explicitly the presence of Christ in the eucharistic species for fear of downplaying the doctrine of transubstantiation; the need to use an ascending order rather than placing the Eucharist last, something that might seem to downplay the real presence; concern to articulate clearly the varying quality of Christ's presence in listing these modes of presence; and concern that preaching was mentioned as a place for the presence of Christ. In addition, a number of reactions noted the closeness of this teaching to that of Pius XII in *Mediator Dei*. Why, asked some of the Council Fathers, would it not be sufficient simply to quote the encyclical?<sup>8</sup>

A comparison with the text of *Mediator Dei* shows that the revisers did pay attention to these criticisms:

20. . . . Along with the Church, therefore, her Divine Founder is present at every liturgical function: [1] Christ is present at the august sacrifice of the altar both in the person of His minister and [2] above all under the eucharistic species. [3] He is present in the sacraments, infusing into them the power which makes them ready instruments of sanctification. [5] He is present, finally, in the prayer of praise and petition we direct to God, as it is written: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" [Mt 18, 20].<sup>9</sup>

Here Pius XII began with the eucharistic presence, then proceeded to Christ's presence in the sacraments, then to his presence in prayer and petition. The sequence is adopted in *Sacrosanctum concilium*, but with the omission of Christ's presence in his proclaimed word.

This also may be illustrated schematically:

<sup>8</sup> The conciliar debate can be found in the *Acta Synodalia* I,1: see comments in Josef Jungmann, "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol. I (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967) 13. See also, Mathijs Lamberigts, "The Liturgy Debate," in *History of Vatican II*, vol. 2: *The Formation of the Council's Identity, First Period and Intersession, October 1962—September 1963*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis; Leuven: Peeters, 1997) 107–66.

<sup>9</sup> AAS 39 (1947) 528; trans. in *Official Catholic Teachings: Worship and Liturgy*, ed. James Megivern (Wilmington, N.C.: Consortium, 1978) 67–68.

Schema	<i>Sacrosanctum concilium</i>	<i>Mediator Dei</i>
[5] in the assembly gathered to pray and sing	[1] in the action of the priest at Mass	[1] in the action of the priest at Mass
[4] in the word and its explanation	[2] in the eucharistic elements	[2] in the eucharistic elements
[a] in the praise of the church (Divine Office)	[3] in the sacraments	[3] in the sacraments
[3] in the sacraments	[4] in the word	
[1] in the action of the priest at Mass	[5] in the assembly gathered to pray and sing	[5] in the assembly gathered to pray and sing

It is interesting to compare and contrast the order in which these various forms of Christ's presence are listed. In *Mediator Dei*, the pope begins with the most important and profound presence of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist, in the minister and in the sacred species. He then proceeds to the presence in the sacraments, and finally to the most diffuse presence, in the community's prayer. The schema however reverses this order, offering one that almost follows the order of a liturgical celebration: gathering for prayer, the word and its explanation, prayer, sacrament, and the eucharistic sacrifice. The final draft of *Sacrosanctum concilium* returns to the order of *Mediator Dei*, but with the addition of the proclamation of the word (the explanation is now omitted as a presence of Christ). The conciliar constitution also substitutes patristic and biblical language for the more Scholastic language of *Mediator Dei*, namely the quotation from Augustine regarding baptism ("when a man baptizes . . .") instead of the language of "instruments of salvation."

#### *The Postconciliar Period*

A great deal of theological reflection on the Eucharist had taken place in the 1950s and the 1960s and continued even after the publication of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Paul VI responded to some of this theological reflection with his encyclical *Mysterium fidei* in 1965. His main goal in the encyclical was to reaffirm the traditional teaching that Christ is present in the eucharistic species by means of "transubstantiation." He entered into dialogue with theologians who were proposing other ways of understanding this presence, such as "transignification" or "transfinalization." In *Mediator Dei* nos. 35 to 39 he expanded the teaching of *Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 7.

35. All of us know well that there is more than one way in which Christ is present in his Church, but it is useful to dwell on this beautiful teaching that the Constitution on the Liturgy brought out briefly [*Sacrosanctum concilium* art. 7]. [5] Christ is present in his Church when it prays, since it is he "who prays for us and in us, and is prayed to by us; he prays for us as our Priest and in us as our Head; as our God he is prayed to by us" [Augustine, *In Ps.* 5, 1: PL 37, 108]. He himself has promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst" [Mt 18:20]. [b] He is present in his

Church as it performs works of mercy, not only because we do to Christ whatever good we do to one of the least of his brothers or sister [Mt 25:40], but also because it is Christ, performing these works through the Church, who continually assists by his divine charity. [c] He is present in his pilgrim Church longing to reach the harbor of eternal life, since it is he who through faith wells in our hearts [Eph 3:17] and through the Holy Spirit whom he gives us pours forth his love in the Church [Rom 5:5].

36. [4a] In yet a different but most real way, he is present in the Church as it preaches. [4] The Gospel that is proclaimed is the word of God and thus is preached only in the name of and by the authority of Christ, the incarnate Word of God and with his help, so that there may be "one flock which is safe with one shepherd" [Augustine, *Contra Litt. Petiliani* 3, 10, 10: PL 43, 353].

37. [d] He is present in his Church as it shepherds and guides the people of God, since the Church's sacred power comes from Christ and since Christ, "the shepherd of shepherds" [*idem*, *In Ps* 86, 3: PL 37, 1102], is present in the shepherds who exercise that power, according to the promise made to the apostles.

38. [1] In a manner even more sublime, Christ also is present in his Church when it offers the sacrifice of the Mass in his name and [3] administers the sacraments. . . . These ways in which Christ is present fill the mind with wonder and present the mystery of the Church for contemplation. [2] But there is another, indeed most remarkable way, in which Christ is present in his Church in the sacrament of the Eucharist. This therefore among all the sacraments is "sweeter in devotion, lovelier in meaning, holier in content" [Giles of Rome, *Theoremata de Corpore Christi*, theor. 50 (Venice, 1521) 127]; for it contains Christ himself and is "as it were the high point of the spiritual life and the purpose of all the sacraments" [ST 3a, 73,3].

39. This presence is called the *real presence* not to exclude the other kinds as though they were not real, but because it is real par excellence, since it is substantial, in the sense that Christ whole and entire, God and man, becomes present. . . .<sup>10</sup>

It is instructive to compare the order of the various presences of Christ as outlined by Paul VI with the order adopted by *Sacrosanctum concilium*:

Schema	<i>Sacrosanctum concilium</i>	<i>Mysterium fidei</i>
[5] in the assembly gathered to pray and sing	[1] in the action of the priest at Mass	[5] in the assembly gathered to pray and sing
	[2] in the eucharistic elements	[b] in the Church performing works of mercy
	[3] in the sacraments	[c] in the pilgrim Church
[4] in the word and its explanation	[4] in the word	[4] in the word preached and proclaimed

<sup>10</sup> AAS 57 (1965) 753-74; trans. in *Documents on the Liturgy* 176:1179-83.

Schema	<i>Sacrosanctum concilium</i>	<i>Mysterium fidei</i>
[a] in the praise of the church (Divine Office)	[5] in the assembly gathered to pray and sing	[d] in the Church as it shepherds
[3] in the sacraments		[3] in the sacraments
[1] in the action of the priest at Mass		[1] in the action of the priest at Mass
		[2] in the eucharistic elements

The first thing to note is that Paul VI returned to the ascending order of the conciliar schema. He began with the presence of Christ in the praying community and concluded with the eucharistic presence, thus situating the latter in the context of the former. Paul VI then added several presences not found either in *Mediator Dei* or *Sacrosanctum concilium*: [b] in the Church performing works of mercy; [c] in the pilgrim Church in its journey; [d] in the shepherding function of the Church. These are not specifically liturgical presences. He then returned to speaking of the presence of Christ in the preaching of the Church and in the proclamation of the word. This can be attributed in part to issues raised in the conciliar debate on the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation and the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests. The pope always used the dative case (*Ecclesiae*) to speak of the presence of Christ “to” the Church as did *Sacrosanctum concilium*. In this he seems to have been influenced by the conciliar language that speaks of the Church as a “sacrament.” Finally, he introduced the distinction between these “real presences” of Christ. They are all “real” but the presence in the eucharistic species is real “per excellentiam,” a phrase for which no adequate English translation exists; hence the French *par excellence* is used. This last is a breakthrough in language, since for most Catholics in 1965 “real presence” would associate the permanent presence of Christ, body and blood, soul and divinity, to the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>11</sup> This papal teaching quickly entered the mainstream of church documents, as we shall see.

The *Instruction on Eucharistic Worship* in 1967 uses the order proposed by Paul VI, although it eliminates the nonliturgical presences. The Instruction also eliminates the reference to the presence of Christ in preaching. It adopts verbatim the pope’s distinction regarding all of these as the “real presence” of Christ. Note, too, that the presence is “to the Church” (dative case) “in” various liturgical actions (prepositional phrase), but “under” the eucharistic species.

9. In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the eucharistic mystery, the faithful should be instructed in the principal modes by which the Lord is

<sup>11</sup> Regis Duffy explores this issue from the point of view of participation and commitment in God (*Real Presence* [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982]).

present to his Church in liturgical celebrations [*Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 7]. [5] He is always present in an assembly of the faithful gathered in his name [Mt 18:20]. [4] He is also present in his word, for it is he who is speaking as the sacred Scriptures are read in the Church. [1] In the eucharistic sacrifice he is present both in the person of the minister, "the same now offering through the ministry of the priest who formerly offered himself on the cross" [Council of Trent, *Decr. De Missa* cap. 2: DS 1743], [2] and above all under the eucharistic elements [*Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 7]. For in that sacrament, in a unique way, Christ is present, whole and entire, God and man, substantially and continuously. This presence of Christ under the elements "is called the real presence not to exclude the other kinds, as though they were not real, but because it is real *par excellence*" [Paul VI, *Mysterium fidei*].<sup>12</sup>

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* in 1975 also takes up this teaching in its description of the general structure of the Mass, but it reverses the order in connection with Christ's presence in the minister and in the word.

7. At Mass or the Lord's Supper, the people of God are called together, with a priest presiding and acting in the person of Christ, to celebrate the memorial of the Lord or eucharistic sacrifice [*Sacrosanctum concilium* 33]. For this reason Christ's promise applies supremely to such a local gathering together of the Church: "Where two or three come together in my name, there am I in their midst" [Mt 18:20]. For at the celebration of Mass, that perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross [Council of Trent, sess. 22, cap. 1: DS 1740; Paul VI, Solemn Profession of Faith, 30 June 1968, no. 24], [5] Christ is really present to the assembly gathered in his name; [1] he is present in the person of the minister, [4] in his own word, [2] and indeed substantially and permanently under the eucharistic elements [*Sacrosanctum concilium* art. 7; Paul VI, *Encycl. Mysterium fidei*, 3 Sept. 1965; SCR Instr. *EuchMyst*, 25 May 1967, no. 9].<sup>13</sup>

The Roman Ritual in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* in 1973 also reintroduces this teaching when describing the purpose of eucharistic reservation. It follows the order of presences as given in the 1967 Instruction, but then curiously adds the notion of Christ's presence in preaching. It specifies that Christ's presence is described as becoming clear "gradually," perhaps during the course of the celebration. One notes too the inclusion of technical language reminiscent of manual theology: "the whole and entire Christ, God and man, . . . substantially and permanently present."

6. In the celebration of Mass the chief ways in which Christ is present in his Church gradually become clear. [5] First he is present in the very assembly of the faithful, gathered together in his name; [4] next he is present in his word, when the Scriptures are read in the Church and explained; [1] then in the person of the minister; [2] finally and above all, in the eucharistic sacrament. In a way that is completely unique, the whole and entire Christ, God and man,

<sup>12</sup> AAS 59 (1967) 539-573; trans. in *Documents on the Liturgy* 179:1238.

<sup>13</sup> *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 4th ed. [27 March 1975] (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot, 1975); trans. in *Documents on the Liturgy* 208:1397.



is substantially and permanently present in the sacrament. This presence of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine "is called real, not to exclude other kinds of presence as if they were not real, but because it is real *par excellence*" [Paul VI, encyclical *Mysterium fidei*, AAS 57 [1965] 764; see Cong. of Rites, instruction *Euch Myst*, no. 55, AAS 59 [1967] 568-569].<sup>14</sup>

The "Introduction" to the *Lectionary for Mass* highlights the presence of Christ in the word and in preaching. The Introduction first distinguishes between the "proclamation" of Christ in the Liturgy of the Word and the "working" of Christ in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, but then it immediately adds that Christ is present in the Church's preaching:

4. In the celebration of the liturgy the word of God is not voiced in only one way nor does it always stir the hearts of the hearers with the same power. [4] Always, however, Christ is present in his word [*Sacrosanctum concilium* art. 7, art. 33; Mk 16:10-20]; as he carries out the mystery of salvation, he sanctifies us and offers the Father perfect worship [*Sacrosanctum concilium* 7].

Moreover, the word of God unceasingly calls to mind and extends the plan of salvation, which achieves its fullest expression in the liturgy. The liturgical celebration becomes therefore the continuing, complete, and effective presentation of God's word.

That word constantly proclaimed in the liturgy is always, then, a living, active word [Heb 4:12] through the power of the Holy Spirit. It expresses the Father's love that never fails in its effectiveness toward us.

24. . . . The purpose of the homily at Mass is that the spoken word of God and the liturgy of the eucharist may together become "a proclamation of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation, the mystery of Christ" [*Sacrosanctum concilium* 35,2]. Through the readings and homily Christ's paschal mystery is proclaimed; [1] through the sacrifice of the Mass it becomes present [*Sacrosanctum concilium* 6, 47]. [4a] Moreover Christ himself is also always present and active in the preaching of his Church [Paul VI, encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*, 3 Sept. 1965; AG 9; EN 43]. . . .<sup>15</sup>

The *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* takes up the teaching to emphasize that the prayer of the Church is always a celebration of Christ's presence in the community, the proclaimed word, and the prayer and praise of the Church.

13. In the Holy Spirit Christ carries out through the Church "the task of redeeming humanity and giving perfect glory to God" [*Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 5], not only when the eucharist is celebrated and the sacraments administered but also in other ways and especially when the liturgy of the hours is

<sup>14</sup> *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* [21 June 1973] (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot, 1973); trans. in *Documents on the Liturgy* 279:2198.

<sup>15</sup> *Ordo lectionum missae*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot, 1981); trans. in *The Liturgy Documents*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: LTP, 1991) 128, 133.

celebrated [*Sacrosanctum concilium* nos. 83 and 98]. There Christ himself is present—[5] in the gathered community, [4] in the proclamation of God's word, [5] "in the prayer and song of the Church" [*Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 7].<sup>16</sup>

One last document of a different kind is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Here the teaching of *Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 7 is simply repeated in the Catechism's section on the liturgy. In the paragraphs on the Eucharist the various presences of Christ are laid out again in yet another order, combining the teaching of *Sacrosanctum concilium* with Paul VI in what seems to me a very strange order, beginning with the word and ending with the Eucharist. The logic of this arrangement is hard to discern. By choosing *Sacrosanctum concilium* instead of Paul VI's *Mysterium fidei*, the Catechism seems to place less emphasis on the sacramental nature of the Church.

1088 "To accomplish so great a work"—the dispensation or communication of his work of salvation—"Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. [1] He is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of his minister, 'the same one now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,' [2] but especially in the Eucharistic species. [3] By his power he is present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptizes, it is really Christ himself who baptizes. [4] He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church. [5] Lastly, he is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised 'where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.'"

1373 "Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us," is present in many ways to his Church [Rom 8:34; cf. LG 48]: [4] in his word, [5] in his Church's prayer, "where two or three are gathered in my name" [Mt 18:20], [b] in the poor, the sick and the imprisoned [cf. Mt 25:31-46], [3] in the sacraments of which he is the author, [1] in the sacrifice of the Mass, and in the person of the minister. [2] But "he is present . . . most especially in the Eucharistic species" [*Sacrosanctum concilium* 7].

1374 [2] The mode of Christ's presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as "the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend" [St. Thomas Aquinas, S.Th. III, 73, 3c]. In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really and substantially contained*" [Council of Trent (1551): DS 1651]. "This presence is called 'real'—by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be 'real' too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present" [Paul VI, *Mysterium fidei* 39].<sup>17</sup>

In general, the postconciliar curial liturgical documents have taken the lead from Pope Paul VI in laying out the teaching of the various

<sup>16</sup> *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* [2 February 1971] (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot, 1971); trans. in *Documents on the Liturgy* 426:3443.

<sup>17</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Washington: USCC, 1994) 283, 346.

modes in which Christ is present. They begin with the gathered assembly and culminate in the eucharistic presence under the species of bread and wine. Clearly the official teaching, taking its origin from Pius XII, adding the presence of Christ in the word and in preaching, and then adding Paul VI's nuance that they are "real presences" with the eucharistic presence as real *par excellence* has generally established part of the way the Catholic Church speaks about the Eucharist and the liturgy in its liturgical books.

The usual grammar of this teaching is that Christ is present "to the Church," using the dative case. In *Sacrosanctum concilium*, the modes of Christ's presence are then "in" various liturgical actions, using the prepositional phrase. In *Mysterium fidei* though, the presence of Christ is always to the Church in its actions, stated by use of the dative case with a gerundive phrase: praying, ministering to the poor and needy, etc. The various modes of Christ's presence are actions of the Church except for the final one, which is "under" the species of bread and wine. The implication of this grammatical structure is that Christ's presence is relational and active. The presence "under" the species seems to be ontological and perhaps more static.

Despite the enthusiasm with which the official documents have adopted this teaching in the introductions to the official books, the teaching has had a mixed history in subsequent reflection by theologians on the Eucharist. Two recent publications by James T. O'Connor<sup>18</sup> and Michael Gaudoin-Parker<sup>19</sup> omit altogether this teaching related to the eucharistic theology of the Church; neither mentions the doctrine of the manifold presence of Christ. The question to ask is: Has this teaching entered postconciliar eucharistic theology?

#### RECENT EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY

In order to get a sense of whether this teaching has entered systematic reflection, I explore three treatments of the Eucharist from the decade immediately after the Council and then three treatments from theological writing since 1992. By taking this limited "core sample" one may be able to judge how the theology of eucharistic presence has been affected by this teaching of the "manifold presence" or various modes of presence of Christ in the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist.

#### *Theologians in the First Decade*

Edward Schillebeeckx's *The Eucharist*<sup>20</sup> intends to bring clarity to the theological debate of the 1950s and 1960s about the eucharistic

<sup>18</sup> James T. O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> Michael Gaudoin-Parker, *The Real Presence through the Ages* (New York: Alba House, 1993).

<sup>20</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968); its Dutch title is revealing: *Christus' tegenwoordigheid in de Eucharistie*; in German, *Die eucharistische Gegenwart*.

presence. In the first section Schillebeeckx gives a historical interpretation of the teaching of the Council of Trent on the eucharistic presence and explains why "transubstantiation" was the only word the council could use to remain faithful to the tradition as the Council Fathers understood it. In the second section, he tries to explain new approaches to this issue. He explores various factors heralding these new approaches, such as changes in philosophical language. As part of these factors leading to a new approach he mentions "the manifold realisation of the one 'real presence' of Christ."<sup>21</sup>

He points out that this teaching is the result of the council's return to biblical and liturgical sources for understanding. He speaks here of a "manifold intensity" of the one real presence of Christ. He reminds us that these are personal presences, since all presence is personal. After detailing the "real presence" of Christ in the word, in the assembly, in anyone who is in the state of grace, in the sacraments, and in the Eucharist, he says, "In each of these cases, there is a *distinctive density* of Christ's real presence."<sup>22</sup> Schillebeeckx maintains that the goal is to situate the eucharistic presence "within the sphere of Christ's real presence in the believer and in the whole believing community."<sup>23</sup> He emphasizes the personal quality of this presence, a presence *for us*. It is a presence that is personal, interpersonal, and reciprocal.

Later in the book he takes all this for granted and speaks about this personal and interpersonal reciprocal presence without explicitly referring to the broader context. Schillebeeckx speaks of the "essential bond between the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and his real presence as Lord living in the Church,"<sup>24</sup> but does not explicitly pursue the manifold modes of presence. He is caught up in the theological controversy about the real presence and the change that brings it about in the eucharistic elements.

Joseph Powers explains the eucharistic controversy to an English-speaking audience in his *Eucharistic Theology*.<sup>25</sup> He begins with an overview of the doctrine of the Eucharist in history and then proceeds to an assessment of the biblical data on the Eucharist. His third chapter on the sacrament of the Eucharist focuses on the issues of causality and grace. The fourth chapter explores the question of the real presence and "transignification."

Powers deals with the teaching on the manifold presence of Christ in Chapter 3 on the sacrament of the Eucharist. He begins with the Council of Trent's placing of the Eucharist in a broad sacramental context (DS 1639). Curiously, Powers conflates *Sacrosanctum concilium* and Paul VI's *Mysterium fidei* in his discussion: "Vatican II enlarges on this statement in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* in its description of the presence of Christ in the liturgy in general, stressing His pres-

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 103-5.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 103.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* 104.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 138.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph Powers, *Eucharistic Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967).

ence in the Mass in the person of the minister and His special presence in the Eucharistic Species, His presence as the principal agent in every sacramental action, His presence in the reading and preaching of the word, and, finally, his presence in every praying community."<sup>26</sup>

This general statement about the liturgy can be said preeminently of the Eucharist, since Christ is always the primary actor in the Eucharist. Powers then uses the word "sacrament" to speak of the manifold presences of Christ: each is a "sacrament" of the one presence of Christ. He continues by making the same point as Schillebeeckx, namely that the presence of Christ in the consecration and in communion must be understood within the broader context of the whole eucharistic action: "It is within this entire sacramental context that the consecration and communion take place, and it is within the totality of this context that the questions of 'presence' and change must be understood."<sup>27</sup> However, this is a complicated proposition. These various manifestations must always be related to the core meaning of the Eucharist: it is one sacramental action.

First, Powers situates the eucharistic ritual in terms of its center: ". . . it is the public worship of the Christ, the act in which the Church gathers together before God in Christ, acknowledging the fact that her existence as God's people is God's own and constant gift."<sup>28</sup> He then enters a lengthy exploration<sup>29</sup> of three central moments of the eucharistic celebration: prayer and song, the proclamation of the word, and the communion-sacrifice. The prayer is the prayer of the Church and of Christ. The word proclaimed is God's plan of salvation in Christ, proclaimed to the community by Christ. Finally, the communion-sacrifice is the heart of this act of worship, which brings the horizontal and vertical elements together.

Powers here roots this teaching of the manifold presence of Christ in the phenomenon of worship: the unfolding of the ritual in a specification of the eucharistic *sacramentum*, the Eucharist as "sign-act." Yet each of these presences points to the central unity, the *res sacramenti*, which is the reality that holds it all together.

Alexander Gerken's influential book *Die Eucharistie*<sup>30</sup> also tries to explain the changes then current in eucharistic theology, and especially to contextualize the developments. His particular contributions is to situate the historical development of eucharistic doctrine within broad philosophical categories: the personal/historical categories of the Scriptures, the symbolic thinking of the patristic period, the "object-thinking" of the Middle Ages, and the existential/phenomenological thinking of today.

He gives a detailed description of the theological developments of the 1950s and 1960s, and proposes the need for a "relational ontology" in

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 90.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 91.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 95.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 95-102.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Gerken, *Die Eucharistie* (Munich: Kösel, 1973).

which to ground our thinking about eucharistic presence. But in offering this contextualization of the eucharistic controversy, he does not include the doctrine of the manifold presence. Its implications can be seen but he never mentions it directly, nor does he try to incorporate the issues of Christ's presence in the assembly at prayer or in the word. This first period offers a serious effort to address the issues of personalism and phenomenology as they contribute to eucharistic theology. The eucharistic presence is always a personal presence. That presence can only be experienced in the actions and activities of life. Exploring those activities can lead us to a deeper appreciation of the complexity and diversity of the presence of Christ to us and in us.

The order of the presences for Schillebeeckx is one of increasing personal intensity. For Powers, this presence is discerned in the unfolding of the ritual action. These, of course, are not necessarily mutually exclusive understandings.

### *Eucharistic Theology since 1992*

I turn now to three approaches to eucharistic theology that have appeared in the last several years. This choice may seem somewhat arbitrary, but will serve as a sample of recent work and allow us to keep this presentation at a reasonable length.<sup>31</sup>

First, I consider David Power's *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition*.<sup>32</sup> Power attempts in this work to make sense of a ritual celebrated "amid the ruins" of late medieval and Tridentine eucharistic piety. This kind of piety collapsed along with the political, cultural, and economic world that crumbled after World War II under the weight of the Holocaust and the atomic bomb. Power offers an analysis of the contemporary situation highlighting diversity in celebration and a world in dissolution. Given that world of diversity and dissolution, he proposes to reflect on the eucharistic tradition by exploring the canonical texts of this tradition (especially the eucharistic prayer). He looks at the ritual of the Eucharist as it developed; at the relationship of Eucharist to ethics; and at the relationship of Eucharist to philosophical thought, or, as Power puts it more succinctly, "remembrance, ritual enactment, Christian practice, and eucharistic doctrine."<sup>33</sup> He uses historical methodology, pausing at three key moments: the New Testament period, the pre-Nicene Church, and the

<sup>31</sup> Other recent systematic book-length treatments in English from a Roman Catholic perspective include Kenan B. Osborne, *The Christian Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist* (New York: Paulist, 1987); James T. O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna*; Liam Walsh, *The Sacraments of Initiation* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988); Gary Macy, *The Banquet's Wisdom: A Short History of the Theologies of the Lord's Supper* (New York: Paulist, 1992); Gerard Austin et al., *Eucharist: Toward the Third Millennium* (Chicago: LTP, 1997).

<sup>32</sup> David Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition* (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 14.

later Middle Ages. The last part of the book presents Power's own attempt to revitalize the eucharistic tradition for a world in ruins.

In his presentation on the contemporary magisterium, Power refers briefly to the teaching on the manifold presence of Christ. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, he argues, placed the Tridentine emphasis on Christ's presence in the eucharistic species in the context of his presence in the assembly, in the Word, and in the minister. He judges that Paul VI and John Paul II in their teaching on the Eucharist are trying to hold together the traditional concerns about sacrifice, presence, transubstantiation, and priesthood with the new developments and language about the Eucharist. He mentions the revision of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* where he detects an attempt to state the traditional understanding in its reference to the Mass as "first and foremost the action of Christ through the ministry of the priest, even though Christ is present not only in him but also in the assembly and in the word."<sup>34</sup>

Power reflects upon the doctrine of the manifold presence of Christ in Chapter 14, "Memorial and Representation." After presenting memory as a human, biblical, and ritual reality, he reflects on the need to remember suffering, the dead, and creation. He also explores "anticipative remembering" where our hope in God's fidelity is expressed. Then he offers his perspectives on "representation," namely, the connection between the historical reality of Christ's death and Resurrection and the Eucharist. Power does not directly cite the teaching of *Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 7 nor Paul VI, but he does address the presence of Christ and his simultaneous absence inasmuch as Christ is not present in the same way he was when he walked the earth. He compares the presence of Christ to the relationship of language and thought. When people write, they are expressing themselves and they are present in their self-expression. Hence, God is present in his Word made flesh. Presence to another implies space, and space requires distance of the one from the other. Communication occurs in time, not immediately, and must be done slowly, allowing for all the ambiguity that human words imply.

"When it is affirmed that God and Christ are present in the eucharistic action or that they are represented in it, this means that they are present subject to all the modalities of symbolic expression and communication."<sup>35</sup> This being so, Power speaks of the various modes of communication: narrative, blessing, bread and wine, eating and drinking, within a community of service. The role of the presider then is seen as being in service to the ritual communication. Power conceives of the presence, it seems to me, in much the same way as Joseph Powers: namely, that presence is mediated in the ritual in all its complexity. What is mediated is the reality of God's presence in Christ. At the same time, the mediation is always incomplete and imperfect, only an inad-

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 263-64.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 318.

equate representation of the whole reality. Power's perspective is an interesting contrast to that of Schillebeeckx who saw the presences in terms of relative "intensities." Power focuses on the distance necessarily entailed in presence rather than on intensity of encounter.

Robert Sokolowski, primarily a philosopher, uses Husserl's phenomenological thought pattern to explore the subject in *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure*.<sup>36</sup> He begins by differentiating positive theology (the exploration of the history of a doctrine) from speculative theology (the use of philosophy to present an ordered account of the truths of the faith). He proposes a third type of theology that he calls the theology of disclosure. It reflects on how the things taught by the Church "come to light . . . [and] how they appear." He uses Husserlian phenomenology that "examines structures of disclosure; . . . [and] describes the forms of manifestation proper to Christian things. It tries to describe how Christian things must display themselves, in keeping with what they are, and how they must distinguish themselves from things that resemble them and with which they may be confused."<sup>37</sup> An example would be distinguishing a meal such as the Passover from the Eucharist.

In Chapter 2, "Eucharistic Perspectives," Sokolowski treats the teaching of the manifold presence of Christ. He begins by stating Aquinas's doctrine on the Eucharist, that it is a sacrament and a sacrifice (*Summa theologiae* 3, q. 79, a. 5 c). This doctrine raises two issues: the identity of Christ's sacrifice and the celebration of Eucharist, yet the recognition that these are two different historical acts; and the change in person from "we" and "us" in most of the prayers and texts of the Eucharist to "you" and "my" in the institution narrative ("Take this all of *you* and eat it, this is *my* body").

Sokolowski then goes on to reflect on this latter point in terms of the unfolding of the eucharistic celebration. He sees it in three stages: the introductory rites, the celebration of the word, and the eucharistic action, an approach very similar to that of Joseph Powers. This is a celebration in which the presence of Christ is "graded in intensity, leading up to the real presence of Christ that occurs when the bread and wine are changed in their substance into the Body and Blood of the Lord."<sup>38</sup> His language is reminiscent of Schillebeeckx's. Sokolowski writes that there is a graded order among those who participate as well, with the one who takes on Christ's own words representing Christ in a particular way. Sokolowski later spends time reflecting on the role of word in the eucharistic celebration,<sup>39</sup> but eventually focuses on developing his theology of disclosure in relationship to the eucharistic

<sup>36</sup> Robert Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Discourse* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1993).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 8.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 31–32.



doctrine of the real presence, and the priest as the one who acts *in persona Christi*.

Raymond Moloney in *The Eucharist*<sup>40</sup> hopes to reflect the peace that now exists after the controversies about the real presence in the immediate conciliar and postconciliar period, and draws upon the advances in liturgical studies since the council. Moloney first deals with the doctrine of the manifold presence of Christ in the final chapter of his historical section. He discusses Paul VI's encyclical and comments on how the pope uses the conciliar teaching to place the real presence "within the context of liturgical presence generally." He states the issue this way: "The fundamental reality, through which the problem of distance between Christ and ourselves is overcome, lies in the mystery of the Church itself (cf. Matt 28:20). It is from Christ's presence in the Church that all the other modes of 'real presence' flow."<sup>41</sup>

He follows the lead of Joseph Powers, Schillebeeckx, and Sokolowski and sees the celebration as a progressive intensification of the presence. Yet there is a nuance in his treatment, since he sees the presence as a leading up to and a leading away from: gathering, hearing the word, and the central action of Christ offering himself to the Father. Leading away, there is communion under both kinds (hence two kinds of presence), the presence in the tabernacle and the presence in the people going out from the church building into the world where Christ will now be more fully present. He comments that this approach breaks with spatial notions of presence and emphasizes a personal kind of presence.<sup>42</sup>

Moloney returns to the notion of the various modes of Christ's presence in his reflections on "presence and change." He explains the various theories of eucharistic change, then speaks about the presence in the tabernacle. He insists that there is no rivalry among the various presences, but rather complementarity. The different modes of presence imply different modes of response to the presence: in others, service; at Mass, active participation; in the tabernacle, praise and adoration.<sup>43</sup>

#### UNRESOLVED ISSUES ON CHRIST'S PRESENCE

This overview of papal and conciliar teaching on the manifold presence of Christ and its integration into theological reflection on the Eucharist allows us to make several points and raise some questions for further consideration.

#### *Difficulties in the Order of the Presences*

From the start, the issues underlying the various sequences employed in presenting the manifold modes of Christ's presence in the

<sup>40</sup> Raymond Moloney, *The Eucharist*, Problems in Theology (Collegeville Liturgical, 1995)

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid* 185

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid* 234-35

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid* 185-86

liturgy, especially in the Eucharist, are difficult to sort out. I have described several ways of understanding the differences in order. One way is to see the presences as in ascending or descending order of importance. *Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 7 begins with the presence in the eucharistic species and then moves toward the presence of Christ in the praying assembly. Paul VI goes in the opposite direction, beginning with the presence in the assembly gathered for prayer, adding several nonliturgical presences, and culminating with the presence in the eucharistic species which he calls real *par excellence* because it is substantial.

Another way is phenomenological, tracing the presences of Christ as they occur in a celebration: in the assembly that gathers, in the word, in the person of the priest who recites the eucharistic prayer, and in the eucharistic species. This approach can be seen as related to the "intensity of presence" approach, culminating in the presence in the eucharistic species. Moloney's insight is different, seeing a leading up to and a leading away from the most intense or important presence in Christ's act of self-giving in the Eucharistic Prayer. Moloney also adds the presence in Christian living, though this is not strictly speaking a liturgical presence.

A third way to understand the presentation of the various modes of Christ's presence is offered by Kilmartin. He does not approach the topic from the viewpoint of eucharistic theology or practice, but from the more general viewpoint of liturgical theology. He analyzes the modes of Christ's presence from the point of view of the "definition of the liturgy" given in *Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 7, namely that the liturgy is for the sanctification of the human person and the glorification of God. He reads the presences in this light, and sees them therefore as anabatic presences (Christ speaking to the Father) and katabatic (Christ speaking to us). In his presentation, it is not the increasingly important "real" presences which are primary, nor the structure of the liturgy (gathering, word, the ministry of the priest in the eucharistic prayer, the eucharistic species in communion), but the dynamic of adoration and sanctification that takes place in the liturgy, revealing its fundamentally dialogical character.<sup>44</sup>

This variety of approaches to the order of the manifold modes of Christ's presence reveals what is at stake in this argument—our relationship to Christ, and through him to the Father and to one another.

### *The Presidency of the Eucharist*

Sokolowski's reflection on the grammar of eucharistic praying and his emphasis on the presidency of the Eucharist led him to speak at

<sup>44</sup> Edward Kilmartin, "The Modes of Christ's Presence in the Liturgy," *Christian Liturgy* 1, 303–55. See also the treatment by Salvatore Marsili in *La Liturgia: Momento nella storia della salvezza*, Anamnesis 1 (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1974) 92–96.

length about the priest as a privileged presence of Christ, and a hierarchy of presences with a concomitant hierarchy of participation. This topic has recently emerged as a particularly vital one. For instance, each of the plenary talks at the meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America in 1997 reflected on the question of eucharistic presidency. In addition, Dennis Ferraro and Sarah Butler carried on a lively debate on the meaning of the phrases *in persona Christi* and *in persona Christi capitis* that has been closely followed by many; David Power and David Coffey have also made important contributions.<sup>45</sup> But this emphasis on the presidency of the Eucharist and its particular manifestation of the presence of Christ has served to make it difficult to maintain the tension created by reflecting on this presence within the context of the whole presence of Christ as articulated in *Sacro-sanctum concilium* no. 7.

Related to the controversy about how the priest functions *in persona Christi* is the growing concern about Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest. Here the debate has revolved around the necessity of a priest to celebrate the Eucharist. Various questions have been raised: What exactly does the community do when it gathers, hears the word, prays, and receives communion? What does a priest add to that? What is lacking when the priest is not there?<sup>46</sup>

This places us squarely at a point of difference between Power and Sokolowski. Sokolowski in his grammatical analysis sees the priest as crucial. Power sees the community as essential with the priest as mediator. Who makes the Eucharist? Is it the priest, the Church, or Christ? That question reminds one of the question implicit in Paul's remarks to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:12): To whom do we belong—to Paul, to Apollos, to Kephass, or to Christ?

### *Lack of a Theology of the Word*

Most of the theological literature I have reviewed is still driven by the Tridentine emphasis on transubstantiation and real presence and ends up dealing with ontological issues surrounding presence. The resulting attempts to use personalism and to emphasize the presence as not simply spatial but personal have been helpful. But Gerken's "relational ontology" and Sokolowski's "theology of disclosure" are concerned about essences, things in themselves. This is clearly important, and it is what Paul VI affirmed in the strongest terms in *Mysterium fidei*.

However, this emphasis on the presence and change in the eucharistic species has led to a neglect of the theology of the word in con-

<sup>45</sup> See the bibliography in the review article by Gerard Austin, "In Persona Christi at the Eucharist," in *Eucharist: Toward the Third Millennium* (Chicago: LTP, 1997) 81–86.

<sup>46</sup> See James Dallen, *The Dilemma of Priestless Sundays* (Chicago: LTP, 1994) esp. 778; he judges that the context of celebration is now gutted: no priest, no sacrificial action of Christ. See also the bibliography in *Liturgy Digest* 4:2 (1997) 121–31.

temporary eucharistic theology. All the official documents mention the presence of Christ in the proclamation of the word, and some of them even mention his presence in preaching. The Introduction to the Lectionary is very clear on this point. This seems to be in part an echo of the Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church no. 12, which states that proclaiming the Gospel is the eminent task of the bishop.

Yet the theology of the two tables<sup>47</sup> and the teaching about the manifold presence of Christ has generally not led to a more thorough-going exploration of the mutual, complementary relation between the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. In what sense is the proclamation of the word to the gathered assembly of believers a necessary part of what follows? An earlier distinction spoke of Foremass and Mass, or Mass of the Catechumens and Mass of the Faithful, or Instruction and Sacrifice. There were three essential parts of the Mass: the offertory, the consecration, and the communion of the priest. One fulfilled one's Sunday obligation to attend Mass if one were present for those three parts. One might incur a venial sin if one were late, but the grave matter required of a mortal sin necessitated missing one of the essential parts. The understanding enshrined in the statement of *Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 56 that the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist form a single act of worship is not yet firmly part of the present-day reflection on the Eucharist.

A further issue is the role of the word in the sacramental action. Sokolowski makes a great deal of the use of the first and second person, singular and plural, in the language of the eucharistic prayer. He uses this line of argument to speak about the special relationship of the priest to the Eucharist. But he does not seem aware of the complexity of the studies of the language of the prayer tradition, the structure of the prayer, and the richness of its theological content. David Power, on the other hand, treats this aspect with sureness, though without exploring in detail the issue of the relevance of Christ's presence in the word to the rest of the celebration.

### *Philosophical Issues*

The various philosophical systems employed have been genuinely helpful in coming to terms with the richness of the eucharistic tradition of presence. Personalism has allowed theologians to complement the more static ontology of the Tridentine and neo-Scholastic tradition with a more dynamic sense of the Eucharist as personal, reciprocal presence.

Phenomenology has allowed a systematic use of the structures of human experience to illumine the complexity of the eucharistic action. Symbol studies have enriched the appreciation of the multivalence and

<sup>47</sup> See *Sacrosanctum concilium* nos. 51 and 56, especially as integrated in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* no. 8.

complex layers of meaning contained in the eucharistic elements.<sup>48</sup> Ritual studies have begun to focus more attention on the ways in which human actions are fundamentally ritual, and how ritual structures contain and express meaning. Related to ritual studies are semiotics and structural anthropology that attempt to explore the deep structures of meaning in an action.<sup>49</sup> This rich philosophical and methodological development has offered the opportunity to delve more deeply into the meaning of the eucharistic presence in its complexity.

### *A Brief Structural Reading*

I have noted that several authors, especially Joseph Powers and Raymond Moloney, have used the structure of the eucharistic celebration to reflect upon the various modes of Christ's presence. Even in their extended treatment of the various modes of Christ's presence as encountered in the unfolding of the liturgy, the tradition's insistence upon the preeminence of the presence of Christ under the eucharistic species has affected their approach. Paul VI's insight that all these modes of presence are real has not had a significant impact on their presentation.

The various modes of Christ's presence are found in the action of the Church (notice the grammar of Paul VI's treatment in *Mysterium fidei*). Even the presence of Christ under the species of the Eucharist can be understood as fundamentally an action. The following structural reading attempts to respect the "reality" of the various modes of Christ's presence and to clarify the way in which the eucharistic species are part of a whole action or ritual.<sup>50</sup> In the brief overview of the structure of the liturgy that follows, I hope to offer a key for exploring the complexity and the various modes of Christ's presence in a more systematic way.<sup>51</sup>

### The Entrance Rites

We are called together to form Christ's body. Gathering the various personalities and talents of the community, we form a cell of the body of Christ to offer praise to the Father. In the order of the various presences of Christ, this presence is primary, since it is the prerequisite for the sacramental action: the Church must gather. The intensity

<sup>48</sup> See, e.g., Philippe Rouillard, "From Human Meal to Christian Eucharist," *Worship* 52 (1978) 425-39, and 53 (1979) 40-56

<sup>49</sup> See Nathan Mitchell, "Revisiting the Roots of Ritual," *Liturgy Digest* 1 1 (Spring 1993) 4-36. Other helpful studies in that issue include "Lexicon" (68-121) and the annotated bibliography (122-46)

<sup>50</sup> See Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy: Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, Studies in the Reformed Rites of the Catholic Church* 4 (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1982) 343-51

<sup>51</sup> I am indebted to the seminal work of the late Mark Searle for elements of this approach, especially his "The Opening and Closing Rites of the Mass," in *Shaping English Liturgy: Studies in Honor of Archbishop Denis Hurley*, ed. Peter C. Finn et al. (Washington: Pastoral, 1990) 53-92

of this presence is determined by its communal nature and can thus be highly or minimally intense, depending on the circumstances (Easter or a summer Sunday would be examples of differing levels of intensity). Since the community is called together by God in the Holy Spirit, it is katabatic. Since the gathering is for the express purpose of worship, it is anabatic.

### The Liturgy of the Word

The usual structure is understood as dialogical: God speaks and we respond. However, the dynamic is more complex: God speaks, we listen and reflect, we respond. The proclamation is of God's word, mediated by ministers, either lectors or deacons. The listening and reflection take place in silence and in the activity of the Holy Spirit. The response is multiple and complex (in the psalm, in the homily, in professing faith, in praying), but also in the sacramental action (offering, the sacrifice, the communion), and finally, also in going forth as Christ's body to recognize Christ in the poor and less fortunate.

In order, the word comes second, yet the word is necessary since it specifies the meaning of the assembly: the heirs of the stories proclaimed. The intensity of this presence is determined by the fundamentally narrative and participatory character of the proclamation of God's word. It focuses on human sanctification (the katabatic) from the point of view of the hearing of the word. It is anabatic from the point of view of the human response in prayer, profession of faith, and sacrificial action, both in the sacrament and in Christian living.

### The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Here again there is a rich diversity of presence: in the gift of Christ's own body, symbolized in bread, wine, and monetary offering. The bread and wine, fruit of the earth and vine, the work of human hands, God's own gift to us, are presented to be transformed into the means of participation in the divine presence.<sup>52</sup>

The eucharistic prayer, invoking the themes of creation and redemption in Christ, mediated by the words of the Church and the voice of the priest, dialogically involving the assembly of believers, combining narrative of God's great acts of the past with supplications for him to continue that powerful acting in our presence, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit—this is a reality too complex to treat more than schematically. Communion, the essential complement to the prayer, gathers all at the sacrificial banquet to taste a morsel of the promise of future glory where Christ's body together with all the angels worships the eternal Godhead.

The presence of Christ in the eucharistic liturgy follows the gathering of the community and the proclamation of the word. Since it combines word and act in a preeminent way, this presence can be seen as

<sup>52</sup> See Herbert McCabe, "Eucharistic Change," *Priests and People* 8 (1994) 217–21.

most intense. Again, the presence here encountered is both sanctifying (especially in communion) and anabatic (in the preparation of the altar and gifts and in the eucharistic prayer).

### The Concluding Rites

At the end of the liturgy, the believer does not remain in the church building. Yet the believer does not cease encountering Christ. The assembly, the word, the eucharistic prayer led by the priest, the reception of communion, all provide the context for the ongoing encounter that takes place in the world. One goes in peace to love and serve the Lord, as one has loved and served God at Mass. And one is conscious first and foremost that God has loved and served each one of us as believers.

### CONCLUSION

This review of the teaching on the manifold presence of Christ has allowed us to explore one vein of eucharistic theology. It has also served as a convenient point of entry into the richness and controversy concerning eucharistic theology and the life of the Church today. It has allowed us to revisit the Eucharist as a manifestation of the paschal mystery of Christ's dying and rising, the ultimate revelation of God's plan for us. This presentation has reminded us of one of the classic themes of eucharistic theology, namely presence, and enabled us to see how this concept has been enriched in the last 50 years by biblical and patristic studies, by papal and conciliar teaching, and by systematic exploration associated with several different philosophical traditions. This review has helped us see the changes that have taken place in theology in the years since Vatican II, especially in the issues that have captured the attention of the papal magisterium and theologians regarding the presidency of the Eucharist and the role of theology in the postmodern world.

I have also pointed out some lacunae in recent reflections on the Eucharist. By using the doctrine of the manifold presence of Christ as a prism, I have shown the lack of development of a theology of the word in relationship to the celebration of the Eucharist. In particular this has indicated how even contemporary treatments of the Eucharist are still tied to the traditional topics of sacrament, sacrifice, and communion. This has further illustrated how a more profound theology rooted in the celebration of the Eucharist still needs to be worked out, especially in the English-speaking context. I have briefly attempted such an approach. The manifold presence of Christ ultimately confronts us in all aspects of our humanity, transforming our community, immersing us in the narrative of our own reality as God's people, Christ's body, and the Spirit's temple. Through the priest's service and mediation, the community remembers and petitions God that Christ's sacrifice may be present and shared in communion. Believers thus transformed go forth to continue that encounter with those they meet.



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