

CHRISTUS SECUNDUM QUOD HOMO INSTITUIT SACRAMENTA

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THE Council of Trent defined that the seven sacraments of the New Law were instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord.¹ In explaining this doctrine, theologians today consider these three additional questions which were not expressly defined at the Council of Trent: (1) Did Christ institute the sacraments immediately? (2) Did He personally determine the matter and form of the sacramental signs as we have them today? (3) Did He institute the sacraments as God or as Man?

That Christ instituted the sacraments immediately is at least certain Catholic doctrine; some theologians maintain that it is implicitly defined.² There is general agreement among the theologians that Christ personally determined the matter and form of the sacramental signs of baptism and the Holy Eucharist; in the case of all the other sacraments, many hold that Christ did not personally determine the matter and form as we have them today.³

In discussing the question whether Christ instituted the sacraments as God or as Man, there is universal agreement among the theologians on these two points: (1) Christ as God is the principal agent in instituting the sacraments; (2) Christ as Man is the meritorious cause of the graces which the sacraments confer. Most theologians teach, in addition, that as Man He is the instrumental agent in instituting the sacraments; St. Thomas was the first theologian who clearly stated this proposition.⁴ Some theologians deny that Christ as Man is the in-

¹ Sess. VII, can. 1 (*DB*, 844).

² Maurice de Baets, "Quelle question le concile de Trente a entendu trancher touchant l'institution des sacraments par le Christ," *Revue Thomiste*, XIV (1906), 30-47. The author of this article lists many theologians; gives their varying views and the theological note they ascribe to the proposition that Christ immediately instituted the sacraments; and concludes that the proposition was not implicitly defined at Trent.

³ A cursory reading of the manuals on sacramentary theology establishes this point.

⁴ St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 64, a. 3; Suarez, *De Sacramentis (Opera Omnia)*, ed. Vivès [Paris, 1877], XX, 221 ff.), disp. XII, sect. 1, n. 3 ff.; Toletus, *In Sum. Theol. Enarr.* (Rome, 1870), III, 438; Billuart, *Summa S. Thomae: De sacramentis in communi*,

strumental agent in instituting the sacraments; Scotus was the first theologian who clearly stated this thesis.⁵

The present study is concerned only with the third of the questions enumerated above, and accepts the common view that Christ as Man is also the instrumental agent in instituting the sacraments. It proposes to examine in the *Summa Theologica* several closely related subjects which give a fuller background for understanding St. Thomas' teaching on the role of Christ as Man in instituting the sacraments. Through these subjects runs the unifying concept that the humanity of Christ was the instrument of His divinity. It occurs also in St. Thomas' discussion on the institution of the sacraments. Hence, by determining in the related subjects the meaning he attaches to the expression, "humanitas fuit instrumentum divinitatis," we may better determine how he understands the agency of Christ's human nature in instituting the sacraments.⁶

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

A sacrament is a visible sign which signifies and confers an invisible grace. No visible sign does this by its very nature. Hence, a sacrament requires institution. This means that one who has the power determines, by an act of his will, the grace to be signified and con-

disp. V, (ed. Lequelen; Paris, no date), VI, 163 ff.; De Lugo, *De Sacramentis in Genere*, disp. 7, sect. 2, n. 22 (ed. Vivès [Paris 1892], III, 363). Franzelin, *De sacramentis* (ed. 5a; Rome, 1910), p. 180 ff.; Billot, *De Sacramentis* (ed. 6a; Rome, 1922), I, 170 ff.; Sasse, *Institutiones Theol. de Sacramentis Ecclesiae* (Freiburg i. Br., 1897), I, 120 ff.; Pesch, *Praelectiones Theologiae Dogmaticae* (ed. 4a; Freiburg i. Br., 1914), VI, 89 ff.; De Smedt, *De Sacramentis in Genere* (ed. 2a; Bruges, 1925), p. 62 ff.; Lercher, *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae* (Oeniponte, 1930), IV, 258 ff.; Mattiussi, *De Sacramentis in Genere* (Rome, 1925), p. 79; Duane, *De Sacramentis in Genere* (Woodstock, 1914), p. 25 ff.; Van Noort—Verhaar, *Tractatus de Sacramentis* (Hilversum, 1927), p. 74 ff.; Connell, *De Sacramentis Ecclesiae* (Bruges, 1933), p. 32 f.; Otten, *Institutiones Dogmaticae* (Chicago, 1923), V, 175 ff.; Lennerz, *De Sacramentis N. L. in Genere* (Rome, 1928), p. 275 ff.

⁵ Scotus, *In IV Sent.*, d. 1, q. 3, d. 2o: "Non enim potest dare certitudinem alicui signo practico, nisi in cuius potestate est causare signatum illius signi; solus autem Deus potest se determinare ad causandum effectum sibi proprium, ergo solus Deus potest dare certitudinem signo practico sui effectus." Frassen, *Scotus Academicus* (Rome, 1901), IX, 86: "Solus Deus potest sacramentum instituere: quippe cum solus virtutem habeat gratiam infallibiliter producendi ad applicationem et positionem alicuius signi practici. . ."

⁶ S. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q. 112, a. 1, ad 1m; III, q. 7, a. 1, ad 3m; q. 8, a. 1, ad 1m; q. 13, a. 2 c et ad 2m; aa. 3-4; q. 18, a. 1, ad 2m; q. 19, a. 1 c; q. 34, a. 1 ad 3m; q. 43, a. 2 c; q. 48, a. 6 c; q. 49, a. 1 c, ad 1m et ad 2m; q. 50, a. 6 ad 3m; q. 56, a. 1 ad 3m; q. 62, a. 5 c; q. 64, a. 3 c.

ferred, endows a sign with that signification, and certainly and infallibly connects with the sign the power to produce the effect signified. This general definition prescind from the questions of immediate or mediate institution of the sacraments, of personal or delegated determination of the sacramental sign, and of the nature of sacramental causality. However these questions are resolved, the above elements enter the general concept of the institution of a sacrament.⁷

Christus secundum quod homo

St. Thomas explains the meaning of the expression *Christus secundum quod homo* in discussing the question, "Is it true to say that Christ as Man is a creature?"⁸ He distinguishes between the reduplication of *homo* by reason of the Person and by reason of the nature. With the former reduplication, the proposition is false, because the person in whom the divine nature and the human are united is eternal and uncreated. With the latter, however, the proposition is true. The norm for understanding what St. Thomas means by the expression *Christus secundum quod homo* is given in these words: "...the name thus resumed in the reduplication refers more properly to the nature than to the Person; . . . it is the same to say: 'Christ as Man,' as it would be to say: 'Christ according as He is Man.'"⁹

Whenever, therefore, St. Thomas says, "Christus secundum quod homo," he speaks of those things which may be predicated of Christ because of His human nature. Where action is ascribed to Christ as Man, St. Thomas is speaking of action in which the human nature is the principal agent, unless the phrase is modified or explained. Where a modification is introduced or an explanation added, the modification limits, and the explanation clarifies our understanding of, the agency of the human nature in the action under discussion.¹⁰

⁷ This definition of the institution of the sacraments is taken from Lennerz, *De Sacramentis N.L. in Genere* (Rome, 1928), p. 275.

⁸ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 16, a. 10.

⁹ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁰ E.g.: "Et ideo esse immediate Redemptorem proprium est Christi, in quantum est homo . . ." (*ibid.*, q. 48, a. 5 c). The statement is unmodified and refers to the human nature of Christ, both as the agent offering His blood as the price of redemption and as the price offered. "... secundum autem quod est homo, operatur ad interiores effectus sacramentorum . . . efficienter, sed instrumentaliter" (*ibid.*, q. 64, a. 3 c). The modification "instrumentaliter" limits the agency of the human nature to an instrumental role.

The Two Wills in Christ

In the Christological section of the treatise on the Incarnate Word, the true Catholic doctrine on the distinct operations in Christ is set forth in the following familiar thesis: "Duae sunt operationes Christi naturales, una divina et altera humana, agente utraque forma cum communione alterius quod ipsius proprium est." The emphasis, ultimately, is on the reality of the human will of Christ and its distinctness from His divine will. Technically, the explanation distinguishes in Christ one *principium quod* (the divine Person), a double distinct *principium quo remotum* (the divine nature and the human nature), and a fourfold distinct *principium quo proximum* (the divine intellect and the human intellect, the divine will and the human will).¹¹

The clause, "agente utraque forma quod ipsius proprium est," implies that the human will remained distinct from the divine will in Christ and was the adequate principle of its own action. Nevertheless, these wills were those of one and the same Person. Therefore the modifying and explanatory phrase, "cum communione alterius," is introduced, to state that the two wills acted harmoniously. This harmony consisted primarily in the fact that the human will was duly subordinated to the divine, was ruled and guided by it in its proper actions. A secondary element in this harmony consists in the fact that whatever the human will willed absolutely, the divine will efficaciously executed, in the event that the execution exceeded the powers of the human nature.¹²

The harmony existing between the divine and the human will in Christ is important—particularly the secondary element, because it envisages an activity in which the human will would be the principal agent of the election, but an instrumental agent in the execution of the thing willed. More will be made of this point later in this study.

The Theandric Act

Theologians usually discuss the theandric act after the presentation of the Catholic doctrine concerning the two distinct wills in Christ.

¹¹ This distinction in proximate principles, as it is predicated of the divine nature, is according to our way of conceiving the *actus purissimus et simplicissimus* which God is.

¹² The harmony between the two natures in Christ is discussed by all the authors who wrote treatises *De Verbo Incarnato*. A documentary foundation is given in *DB*, 292. For the harmony as here described, cf. Otten, *Institut. Dogmat.*, III, n. 201, c.

They commonly distinguish three classes of acts in Christ: (1) acts exclusively divine; (2) acts exclusively human; (3) acts in which both the divine and the human nature operate elicitively. The third class is generally called "theandric acts." In the strict sense, as used by most authors, a theandric act is one in which the divine nature uses the human nature as its instrument in an action in which both natures are elicitive agents. In any such activity, it is clear that the divine nature is the principal agent, and the human nature is the instrumental cause, of the effect produced. Further, each principle remains distinct in operation; and, though one effect is produced, it proceeds from two causes.

There is, however, a wider meaning in which "theandric act" is used by some authors. Billot, for example, calls the redemption of mankind the chief theandric act;¹³ it is the work, above all others, which is most properly ascribed to the God-Man; it is the act, above all others, which He came to perform. If we view it under the formality of atonement made to God for the sins of man, the human will of Christ was clearly the principal agent, the sole elicitive principle. The term "theandric," etymologically, should embrace that and other acts, excluding only those which proceed exclusively from the divine nature, such as the creation of souls.

Since authors use the term in both the strict and the wide sense, the statement that the institution of the sacraments is a theandric act need not exclude some principality of agency from the human will of Christ in that institution. Consequently, the teaching of an author on the agency of the human will of Christ in instituting the sacraments cannot be clearly determined from his naming that institution a theandric act.¹⁴

¹³ Billot, *De Verbo Incarnato* (ed. 6a; Rome, 1922), p. 329: "Ad operationem theandricam maxime pertinet satisfactio qua Christus condigne satisfacit pro peccatis nostris necnon et meritum quo generi humano meruit restitutionem gratiae." Compare Galtier, *De Incarnatione et Redemptione* (Paris, 1926), n. 125: "Stricto sensu theandricae sunt operationes mixtae, quarum effectui totali cooperatur, per modum principii elicitivi quo, utraque forma: sic v. gr. ambulare in mare, miracula voce et imperio patrare, condere Ecclesiam, instituere sacramenta. . . . Tunc enim una est complexive operatio utriusque formae, non tantum propter unitatem suppositi et unitatem moralem inter utriusque formae operationem propriam, sed etiam propter coefficientiam unius effectus resultantis."

¹⁴ Galtier, *op. cit.*, n. 125.

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST AS INSTRUMENT OF THE DIVINITY

As a prelude to the examination of the texts in the *Summa Theologica* in which the expression, "humanitas fuit instrumentum divinitatis," is used, this observation of Billot is helpful:

When the assumed nature is said to be the instrument of the divine nature, one must not always think of "instrument" under the same formality, but strictly or broadly according to the subject matter and the different conditions of work. In the strict sense, the human nature was the instrument of the divine nature in working miracles, but not in all other works—not in exercising virtue, or in meriting, or in making atonement. The work of merit and atonement did proceed from the humanity as from the principal cause, and to them accrued infinite value from the united divinity as a simple resultant from the divine Person. So, if you understand "instrument" broadly—as the thing whose activity is either directed, dignified, or subordinated to a higher cause—in that sense certainly the humanity was the instrument of the divinity. But if you take the strict meaning of "instrument," as all that and only that which is moved to do something for which it has not the proportionate power of nature or grace, the humanity was not the instrument of the divinity in all things.¹⁵

The doctrine of St. Thomas on the instrumentality of the human nature of Christ is best stated, in a general way, in his discussion on the consequences of the hypostatic union as they affect the human will of Christ. This is quite logical, since we study the will when seeking the determinant or guide of man's rational activity. Similarly, we relate all the external activity of God to His will. St. Thomas puts the difficulty: "An instrument is not moved by its own will but by the will of the mover. But the human will of Christ was the instrument of His Godhead. Hence the human nature was not moved by its own will, but by the divine will."¹⁶ And he says in answer: "It is proper to an instrument to be moved by the principal agent, yet diversely, according to the property of its nature;. . .an instrument animated by a rational soul is moved by its will;. . .and hence it was in this manner that the human nature of Christ was the instrument of the Godhead and was moved by its own will."¹⁷

Having established the point that the instrumentality of the human nature of Christ does not exclude the proper activity of that nature, St. Thomas proceeds to emphasize the distinct operation of the human

¹⁵ Billot, *De Verbo Incarnato*, p. 327, note 2.

¹⁶ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 18, a. 1, 2m.

¹⁷ *Loc. cit.*

will of Christ in actions in which it was the instrument of His divinity. In the same context he stresses the harmony existing between the divine and the human will.¹⁸ He constantly insists on the truth that, though one effect is produced in the joint operation of the two wills, the human will never loses its own proper activity.¹⁹ The fact that Christ's human nature is animated by a rational soul and hypostatically united with the divine nature in the Person of the Word places its instrumentality in a special class. The fact that the instrument moved is a human will sharpens the awareness that, in the action in which it is an instrument, it has an operation of its own.

The Working of Miracles

The instrumentality of Christ's human nature in working miracles has been widely treated and universally taught by Catholic theologians. The precise nature of this instrumentality has also been the object of much study, though there are disagreements on this subject.²⁰ From the general discussion on the existence and nature of the power to work miracles, some points may be isolated which have a direct bearing on understanding St. Thomas' doctrine on the instrumentality of Christ's human nature in instituting the sacraments.

In speaking of the power of Christ's soul, St. Thomas first excludes omnipotence, for the reason that the soul of Christ is part of His human nature, and omnipotence, being uniquely proper to the divine, infinite nature, cannot be found in a human, finite nature.²¹ Proceeding to a discussion of the power of the soul of Christ to effect miraculous changes in creatures, he predicates this power of Christ's soul as the instrument of His Godhead. This power has just one limitation, namely, that the miracles be ordainable to the end of the Incarnation.²²

The grace to work miracles was most excellently in the soul of Christ. It is given, not that one may work miracles by one's own power, but by divine power.²³ The cause of the miraculous effect is divine omnipotence, which cannot be communicated to any creature;

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 19, a. 1 c.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2m et ad 2m.

²⁰ Cf., for example, Van Hove, *La doctrine du miracle chez saint Thomas* (Paris, 1927), pp. 148-59, where intentional dispositive causality is defended against the instrumental physical causality espoused by Hugon (*La causalité instrumentale dans l'ordre surnaturel* [ed. 2e; Paris, 1924], pp. 174-75).

²¹ *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 13, a. 1 c.

²² *Ibid.*, a. 2 c.

²³ *Ibid.*, ad 3m.

God is always the principal agent of miracles, and all co-operation in such activity remains in the realm of instrumental causality.²⁴

Very pertinent to our present study is the teaching of St. Thomas on the power of Christ's soul to accomplish the things willed by His human will. He could do everything He willed to be done by His own power, but He could accomplish the things He willed to be done by divine power only as the instrument of His divinity.²⁵ There is no complete enumeration of the things which fall into this class. The wisdom and knowledge of Christ would be the guide in such willing, since they would give a clear understanding of the extent to which His human power could be used. Concomitantly, the perfect harmony existing between the divine and the human will in Christ would guarantee that the human will would not elect to accomplish by its own power anything which Christ knew the human nature alone could not effect. The wisdom and knowledge of Christ would likewise reveal the things that could be effected by divine power and willed by the human will because such operations were ordainable to the end of the Incarnation. In willing things to be accomplished by divine power, the human will of Christ would have some principality of agency, so far as the election is concerned. In the execution, the divine will would be the principal agent, and the human nature, the instrumental agent. The harmony between the two wills in Christ provides for this type of activity and seems to permit a distinction between election and execution by which the human will could be the principal agent of the election, and the instrumental agent in the execution of the thing willed. Clearly, this does not exclude election also on the part of the divine will, in the final analysis of any operation in which the above distinction is verified.

St. Thomas states that true miracles can be wrought only by divine power, since God alone can change the order of nature; and that is what is meant by a miracle. He quotes St. Leo, who asserted that

²⁴ *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 178, a. 1, ad 1m.

²⁵ "... anima Christi dupliciter aliquid voluit: uno modo quasi per se implendum: et sic dicendum est quod quidquid voluit, potuit; non enim conveniret sapientiae eius quod aliquid vellet per se facere quod suae virtuti non subjaceret. Alio modo voluit aliquid ut implendum virtute divina; sic resurrectionem proprii corporis et alia huiusmodi miraculosa opera: quae quidem non poterat propria virtute sed secundum quod erat instrumentum Divinitatis" (*ibid.*, III, q. 13, a. 4 c).

the divine nature shone forth in the miracles of Christ, the human nature being the instrument of the divine action, and the human action receiving power from the divine nature.²⁶

The Passion of Christ

In offering sacrifice, in making atonement, in meriting, Christ's humanity was not a strict instrument of His divinity; in these operations, His human will was the principal agent, the sole elicitive principle. Hence, in discussing these operations, when Christ's humanity is called the instrument of His divinity, the word instrument should be taken in the broad sense. It is significant that in his investigation of the causality of the passion in our salvation—whether it was exerted under the aspect of merit or of atonement or of sacrifice—St. Thomas does not use the expression, "Humanitas fuit instrumentum divinitatis,"²⁷ which he does use in discussing the question: "Did the passion of Christ cause our salvation efficiently?"²⁸ Here he distinguishes between the principal and instrumental cause of salvation: God is the principal cause, but all Christ's actions and sufferings operate in virtue of His Godhead, because His humanity was the instrument of His divinity; therefore, Christ's passion accomplishes our salvation efficiently.²⁹ Here we have instrumentality in the strict sense. Therefore, Christ's divine and His human nature are both active in accomplishing our salvation. It is important that this point be kept in mind when discussing the agency of the human nature of Christ in instituting the sacraments, which are the divinely appointed channels through which the grace Christ merited by His passion is given to men.

Several times elsewhere, in explaining the agency of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection for the accomplishment of our salvation, St.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, q. 43, a. 2 c. In this connection it is worth noting that Saint Thomas has in mind miracles of the first class, which exceed the power of all created nature. Cf. A. Cotter, *Cosmologia* (Boston, 1931), p. 338, where *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 110, a. 4 is cited.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, q. 48, aa. 1-3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, a. 6.

²⁹ "Duplex est efficiens: principale et instrumentale. Efficiens quidem principale humane salutis est Deus. Quia vero humanitas Christi est divinitatis instrumentum, ideo ex consequenti omnes actiones et passiones Christi operantur in virtute divinitatis ad salutem humanam. Et secundum hoc passio Christi efficienter causat salutem humanam" (*loc. cit.*).

Thomas clearly speaks of the sacred humanity as a strict instrument.³⁰

Thus, in considering the instrumentality of the sacred humanity in the passion, we must distinguish between the agent offering, and the agency of, the passion for the working of our salvation. The agent of the passion—considered as a meritorious act, as an act of atonement, as a true sacrifice—was the human will; thus, of the passion under these aspects, Christ as Man is the principal cause, the sole elicitive principle. In the application of the fruits of the redemption which the passion wrought, the human nature is the instrument of the Godhead.

God has decreed that in the present economy of salvation the graces merited by Christ should ordinarily be distributed through the sacraments; in this distribution, Christ as Man is the instrument of His divinity. We ask, therefore, whether, in the institution of the sacraments, the certain and infallible channels of grace, any principality of agency may be predicated of the sacred humanity. To understand clearly St. Thomas' answer, one subject further must be considered.

The Production of Grace

God alone is the efficient cause of grace. St. Thomas states this clearly and adds this excellent reason: "The gift of grace surpasses every capability of created nature, since it is nothing short of a partaking of the divine nature, which exceeds every other nature. And thus it is impossible that any creature should cause grace."³¹ Thus the tremendous effect of grace in making men share the divine nature by a participated likeness is the reason why God must be the author of grace.

Two ready objections to this thesis are stated and answered. They stem from the scriptural assertion that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and from the Catholic doctrine that the sacraments are causes of grace.³² The first objection is strengthened by the truth that the name "Jesus Christ" denotes the created nature assumed as well as the divinity assuming that nature. The answer to the first objection is that the human nature is the instrument of Christ's Godhead, and

³⁰ *Ibid.*, q. 49, a. 1 c; q. 50, a. 6, 3m; q. 56, a. 2, ad 2m.

³¹ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 112, a. 1 c.

³² *Ibid.*, 1m et 2m.

an instrument brings forth the action of the principal agent, not by its own power, but by the power of the principal agent. Hence the humanity of Christ does not cause grace by its own power, but by the power of the divinity united to it.³³

In reply to the objection drawn from the Catholic doctrine that the sacraments are causes of grace, St. Thomas again distinguishes between the agency of the principal and of the instrumental cause, adducing as an analogy the relation of the human nature of Christ (the instrumental cause) to His divinity (the principal cause) in the production of grace.³⁴ Here the point stressed is that the principal cause of grace is God alone. The perfection of Christ's human nature as an instrument in comparison with the sacraments as instruments is brought out later.³⁵

Thus in the production of grace, God is the principal cause, for He alone can determine Himself to give the *consortium divinae naturae*; the humanity of Christ is an instrumental cause, operating as an instrument in the power of the divinity united to it; the sacraments are also instrumental causes, operating by the power of the Holy Spirit working in them.

The important point at the moment is that, in the production of grace, the role of the human nature of Christ is considered in the same context with the role of the sacraments. In the light of this, the agency of Christ as Man in instituting the sacraments can ultimately be better understood.

The emphasis on the instrumental agency of Christ's human nature in the production of grace gives rise to an objection in considering whether Christ's human soul possessed grace. The objection states that an instrument does not need a habit for its own proper act; hence, the soul of Christ did not need the habit of grace.³⁶ St. Thomas

³³ "Humanitas Christi est sicut 'quoddam organum Divinitatis eius' ut Damascenus dicit. Instrumentum autem non agit actionem agentis principalis propria virtute, sed virtute principalis agentis. Et ideo humanitas Christi non causat gratiam propria virtute, sed virtute divinitatis adjunctae, ex qua actiones humanitatis Christi sunt salutares" (*ibid.*, ad 1m).

³⁴ "Sicut in ipsa persona Christi humanitas causat salutem nostram per gratiam, virtute divina principaliter operante; ita etiam in sacramentis novae legis quae derivantur a Christo, causatur gratia instrumentaliter quidem per ipsa sacramenta, sed principaliter per virtutem Spiritus Sancti in sacramentis operantis. . . ." (*ibid.*, ad 2m).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 62, a. 5 c.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, q. 7, a. 1, 3m.

gives as one of the reasons for the necessity of grace in Christ's human soul, the fact that Christ as Man was mediator between God and man and so should have grace that would flow over into others.³⁷ In direct answer to the objection raised, he says that the humanity of Christ is an instrument animated by a rational soul, and as such is so acted upon that it also acts.³⁸ Pursuing the point of Christ's relation to men and expressly as the Head of His Church, he faces the difficulty that Christ could not be Head of the Church as Man, because the spiritual sense and motion imparted by the Head are by grace, which Christ does not impart as Man.³⁹ St. Thomas gives as one of the reasons for Christ's headship of the Church the fact that He has the power to give grace to all the members of the Church.⁴⁰ Furthermore, he distinguishes between Christ as God and Christ as Man: Christ has the power to produce grace authoritatively as God; Christ has the power to produce grace instrumentally as Man, because His humanity is the instrument of His divinity. In the same context it is stated that Christ as Man is the meritorious cause of our salvation.⁴¹ Thus, in one reply, four concepts are connected which recur in the discussion of the agency of Christ's human nature in instituting the sacraments. The four concepts are: (1) God's power of authority; (2) the instrumental power of Christ as Man; (3) the meritorious cause of man's salvation; (4) the efficient role of Christ as Man in the production of grace.

The joining of merit and efficiency in the relation of Christ's human nature to the production of grace could be misinterpreted. Admittedly, the sacred humanity was the principal cause, and the human will of Christ, the sole elicitive principle, of His meritorious act. By His passion He merited the graces which are given by the sacraments.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, c.

³⁸ "Humanitas Christi est instrumentum Divinitatis, non quidem sicut instrumentum inanimatum, quod nullo modo agit, sed solum agitur; sed tamquam instrumentum animi rationali animatum quod ita agitur quod etiam agit. Et ideo ad convenientiam actionis oportuit eum habere gratiam habitualem" (*Ibid.*, ad 3m).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, q. 8, a. 1, 1m.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, c.

⁴¹ "Dare gratiam aut Spiritum Sanctum convenit Christo, secundum quod est Deus, auctoritative: sed instrumentaliter convenit etiam ei, secundum quod est homo; in quantum scilicet eius humanitas instrumentum fuit divinitatis eius; et ita actiones ipsius ex virtute divinitatis fuerunt nobis salutiferae, utpote gratiam in nobis causantes. et per meritum et per efficientiam quamdam" (*Ibid.*, ad 1m).

Since this is so, and since efficiency is drawn into close connection with merit, one might conclude that there is question here of the human nature of Christ as in some way the principal agent in conferring the grace mentioned. It is evident, however, from all that has been said on the instrumentality of the human nature of Christ in the production of grace, that such a conclusion would be unwarranted. Nevertheless, what is to be said later of the human nature of Christ as the principal ministerial agent, operating by the power of excellence communicated to it by the divinity, in instituting the sacraments, will be clearer if the discussion just completed is borne in mind.

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST IN THE INSTITUTION OF THE SACRAMENTS

We have already seen that the reason why St. Thomas excluded both the humanity of Christ and the sacraments of the New Law from principal agency in the production of grace was that grace gives a participated likeness of the divine nature, and only God can produce that marvelous effect.⁴² It is not surprising, therefore, that the same reason should be repeated in the discussion on the question: "Are the sacraments causes of grace?" Here St. Thomas clearly defines the respective roles of principal and instrumental causes in activity in general, and in the particular activity which the production of grace comprises: the principal cause works by the power of its own form, and the effect is likened to that form; the instrumental agent works, not by the power of its own form, but only by the motion by which it is moved by the principal agent; hence, the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal agent. Since grace gives the soul *consortium divinae naturae*, the very effect calls attention to God as the principal cause in the production of grace, even sacramentally.⁴³

⁴² "Nulla res potest agere ultra suam speciem, quia semper oportet quod causa sit potior effectui. Donum autem gratiae excedit omnem facultatem naturae creatae, cum nihil aliud sit quam quaedam participatio divinae naturae, quae excedit omnem aliam naturam. Et ideo impossibile est quod aliqua creatura gratiam causet. Sic enim necesse est quod solus Deus deificet, communicando consortium divinae naturae per quamdam similitudinis participationem, . . ." (*Ibid.*, I-II, q. 112, a. 1 c).

⁴³ "Duplex est causa agens, principalis et instrumentalis. Principalis quidem operatur per virtutem suae formae cui assimilatur effectus, . . . et hoc modo nihil potest causare gratiam nisi Deus; quia gratia nihil aliud est quam quaedam participata similitudo divinae naturae. . . . Causa vero instrumentalis non agit per virtutem suae formae sed solum per motum quo movetur a principali agente. Unde effectus non assimilatur instrumento sed

Thus the relation of the sacraments to God in the production of grace is clearly given.

But the sacraments are derived from Christ. What is their relation to Him? St. Thomas distinguishes between the united and the separated instrument; both have a relation to the effect produced, but the former moves the latter and is a more perfect instrument. In the production of grace, God is the principal cause, the humanity of Christ is the united instrument, the sacraments are the separated instruments. The sacraments receive their saving power from Christ's divinity through His humanity. Now, Christ freed us from sin by His passion—by atonement, by merit, and efficiently. Hence, it is clear that the sacraments have their power from the passion of Christ.⁴⁴

Thus we have caught up in the two discussions just mentioned the principal concepts needed for evaluating St. Thomas' teaching on the role of the sacred humanity in instituting the sacraments. God is the principal cause of sacramental grace; the humanity of Christ has the agency of an instrument united to the divinity in a hypostatic union; the sacrament has the agency of a separated instrument. Further, sacramental grace is the grace which Christ merited by His passion and death. Hence, the sacraments derive their power from the passion of Christ. Since Christ as Man is the meritorious cause of the graces which the sacraments confer, and since His human will was the principal agent, the sole elicitive principle, of the act whereby He merited the graces which the sacraments confer, may any principality of agency be predicated of Christ in instituting the sacraments?

St. Thomas approaches this express question very carefully and logically. He first asks: "Can God alone produce the interior effect

principali agenti; . . . Et hoc modo sacramenta novae legis causant gratiam" (*Ibid.*, q. 62, a. 1 c).

⁴⁴ "Est autem duplex instrumentum: unum quidem separatum, ut baculus; aliud autem conjunctum, ut manus. Per instrumentum autem conjunctum movetur instrumentum separatum. . . . Principalis autem causa efficiens gratiae est ipse Deus, ad quem comparatur humanitas Christi sicut instrumentum conjunctum; sacramentum autem sicut instrumentum separatum. Et ideo oportet quod virtus salutifera a divinitate Christi per eius humanitatem in ipsa sacramenta derivatur. . . . Christus liberavit nos a peccatis nostris praecipue per suam passionem, non solum efficienter et meritorie sed etiam satisfactorie. . . . Unde manifestum est quod sacramenta habent virtutem ex passione Christi cuius virtus quodammodo nobis copulatur per susceptionem sacramentorum" (*Ibid.*, a 5 c).

of the sacraments?⁴⁶ He then asks: "Did God alone institute the sacraments?"⁴⁶ The connection between the two questions is obvious. If God alone can produce the interior effect of the sacraments, it follows that God alone can guarantee certainly and infallibly that the sacramental sign will produce grace. Since the institutor of the sacrament must certainly and infallibly connect with the sacramental sign the power to produce the sacramental effect, it follows that God alone can institute the sacraments if God alone can produce the sacramental grace.

St. Thomas' answer stresses the power that operates in the sacraments, ascribes it to God as the principal agent, sets off the divine agency from that of the minister of the sacrament, and concludes that God alone can produce the interior effect of the sacraments, and that He alone institutes the sacraments.⁴⁷ The minister of the sacraments in question here is the minister of the Church, not the humanity of Christ.

With the principal agency of God completely fixed, St. Thomas next considers the agency of the human nature of Christ. In view of all that has been said on the relation of the power to institute the sacraments to the power to produce grace, we are not surprised to find St. Thomas putting the question this way: "Did Christ as Man have the power to produce the interior effect of the sacraments?"⁴⁸ Nor are we surprised to find him insisting that the agency of the sacred humanity is of the same general character in instituting the sacraments as in the production of grace.

He states that Christ produced the interior effect of the sacraments both as God and as Man: as God, by power of authority; as Man, both meritoriously and efficiently, but His efficient role is limited to being the instrumental cause.⁴⁹ Merit and efficiency are referred to

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, q. 64, a. 1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, a. 2.

⁴⁷ "... Agens autem respectu sacramenti est duplex, scilicet instituens sacramentum et utens sacramento instituto, applicando scilicet ipsum ad inducendum effectum. Virtus autem sacramenti non potest esse ab eo qui utitur sacramento, quia non operatur nisi per modum ministerii. Unde relinquitur quod virtus sacramenti sit ab eo qui instituit sacramentum. Cum igitur virtus sacramenti sit a solo Deo, consequens est quod solus Deus sit sacramentorum institutor" (*Ibid.*, c).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, a. 3.

⁴⁹ "Interiorum sacramentorum operatur Christus, et secundum quod est Deus, et secundum quod est homo; aliter tamen et aliter. Nam secundum quod est Deus, operatur in sacramentis per auctoritatem; secundum autem quod est homo, operatur ad interiores effectus sacramentorum meritorie et efficienter, sed instrumentaliter" (*Ibid.*, c). It is to

the influence of the passion of Christ on our justification; it has already been indicated that only in the effecting of our salvation is the passion strictly an instrument.⁵⁰ The humanity of Christ is the principal cause of His merit. When discussing the merit of Christ, St. Thomas never speaks of His humanity as the instrument of His Godhead. Yet when writing of the power of Christ's human nature to produce grace, he consistently speaks of the humanity of Christ as the instrument of His Godhead.⁵¹ Since grace is the interior effect of the sacraments, Christ as Man is here again clearly depicted as the instrumental cause in its production.

At this point St. Thomas passes to a consideration of the power of Christ's human nature to institute the sacraments. He recalls concepts already mentioned and adds a new concept. From the fact that Christ's human nature is an instrument united to the Godhead in unity of Person, he argues to the headship and efficiency which the human nature has over the extrinsic instruments, which are the ministers of the Church and the sacraments themselves. Hence, just as Christ has the power of authority over the sacraments as God, so as Man, He has the power of ministry-in-chief, or the power of excellence. This consists in four elements: (1) the merit and power of the passion operate in the sacraments; (2) the sacraments are sanctified in His name; (3) He who gave the sacraments their power could institute them; (4) He could produce the sacramental effect without using an exterior sacramental sign.⁵²

There is definitely a question in this passage of Christ's power as Man over the sacraments, one of the constitutive elements of which is

be noted that though the meritorious and efficient agency of Christ are here joined, the word "instrumentaliter" modifies only the efficiency.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, q. 48, a. 1c.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 112, a. 1, ad 1m et ad 2m; III, q. 7, a. 1, 1m, c, ad 1m; q. 8, a. 1, ad 1m.

⁵² "Sed tamen quia (humanitas Christi) est instrumentum conjunctum divinitati in persona, habet quamdam principalitatem et causalitatem respectu instrumentorum extrinsecorum, qui sunt ministri Ecclesiae. Et ideo sicut Christus in quantum Deus, habet potestatem auctoritatis in sacramentis, ita in quantum homo habet potestatem ministerii principalis sive potestatis excellentiae; quae quidem consistit in quattuor: primo quidem in hoc quod meritum et virtus passionis eius operatur in sacramentis; . . . secundo . . . quod in eius nomine sanctificantur; . . . tertio . . . quod ipse qui dedit virtutem sacramentis, potuit instituere sacramenta. Et quia causa non pendet ab effectu sed potius e converso, ideo quarto ad excellentiam potestatis Christi pertinet quod ipse potuit effectum sacramentorum sine exteriori sacramento conferre" (*Ibid.*, III, q. 64, a. 3 c).

the power to institute them; this power gives Christ some principality of agency over them. In its exercise, is the humanity the mere instrument of the divinity, or is it a principal agent? When the expression, "Christus secundum quod homo," is used in discussing merit, atonement, or sacrifice, it means that the human will was the principal cause, the sole elicitive agent, of the act.⁵³ Does the statement, "Christus secundum quod homo instituit sacramenta," predicate of the human will in some way a principality of agency in instituting the sacraments?

St. Thomas gives us the key to his understanding of the power of Christ's human nature to institute the sacraments by connecting this power with that of producing the interior effect of the sacraments without using the exterior sacramental sign. The effect of the sacraments is grace. The agency of the human nature of Christ is the same, therefore, in instituting the sacraments as in producing grace. That agency has already been established as instrumental causality. In conferring grace, the humanity of Christ was the strict instrument of His Godhead. In addition to the texts already mentioned on this point, there are others, quite pertinent here since they use the same terminology as describes the power of excellence.

To the proposition that God alone produced the interior effect of the sacraments objection was made by citing Christ's forgiveness of the sins of the paralytic. It was stated that Christ forgave these sins as Man; and since the forgiveness of sins is the interior effect of the sacraments, God was not the only one who could produce that effect.⁵⁴

⁵³ "Cum autem dicitur satisfactionis pretium debere esse ab humanitate, sensus est quod actio satisfactoria debet esse elicitive a natura humana tamquam a causa principali"; and the footnote adds: "Cum dicit S. Thomas satisfactionem condignam pro peccato non potuisse esse nisi ab *instrumento* coniuncto divinitatis, lato sensu sumit instrumentum. Nam operatio satisfactoria fuit ab humanitate ut a causa operante per propriam virtutem; infinitus autem satisfactionis valor resultabat ex infinita dignitate suppositi in quo erat humanitas" (Billot, *op. cit.*, p. 500). The point made here is accurate, but I have not been able to find any place in the *Summa* where ambiguity could result from St. Thomas' use of the expression "humanitas fuit instrumentum divinitatis." In *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 48, aa. 1-5, where merit, atonement, sacrifice, redemption, are discussed, the expression mentioned is never used.

⁵⁴ "Dominus dicit: 'Sciatis quia Filius hominis habet potestatem in terra dimittendi peccata' (Matt. 9:6). Sed remissio peccatorum est interior effectus sacramentorum. Ergo videtur quod Christus, secundum quod homo, interiorem effectum sacramentorum operetur." (*Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 64, a. 3, 2m).

In an earlier discussion, the same point had been made on the question: "Is this true: Christ as Man is God because He forgave sins?" St. Thomas took the same scripture text and explained how Christ forgave sins as Man. The Son of Man had the power on earth to forgive sins by the power, not of His human, but of His divine nature. In the divine nature the power to forgive sins resides authoritatively; in the human nature that power is found instrumentally and as in a minister.⁵⁵

In this passage we have the phrase "instrumentally and as in a minister" brought into close connection with, and set off from, the power of authority. If we substitute the power of excellence for the expression "instrumentally and as in a minister," we have the sense of the difference between the power of excellence and that of authority. This difference is expressed in the text dealing with the power of Christ's human nature in instituting the sacraments. St. Thomas again makes the substitution in answering a difficulty brought against the necessity of the sacrament of penance. The difficulty states that Christ forgave the sins of the adulterous woman without the exterior sacrament. St. Thomas replies that the power of excellence enabled Christ to forgive sins without the external sacramental sign, but not without interior sorrow for sins, which He worked by grace in the soul of the sinful woman.⁵⁶

Thus, in exercising the power of excellence, Christ as Man was the instrument of His divinity. The exercise of that power in the instances just cited led to the production of the interior effect of the sacraments without the use of the exterior sacrament. The interior effect is grace, in the production of which the human nature was the instrument of the divinity. St. Thomas directly relates the power to produce the interior effect of the sacraments to the power to institute the sacraments. Hence, it is fitting to conclude that St. Thomas understood the thesis,

⁵⁵ "Filius hominis habet in terra potestatem dimittendi peccata, non virtute humanae naturae, sed virtute divinae naturae; in qua quidem natura divina consistit potestas dimittendi peccata per auctoritatem; in humana autem natura consistit instrumentaliter et per ministerium" (*Ibid.* q. 16, a. 11 ad 2m).

⁵⁶ "Ad potestatem excellentiae, quam solus Christus habuit, pertinuit quod Christus effectum sacramenti poenitentiae, qui est remissio peccatorum, contulit mulieri adulterae sine exterioris poenitentiae sacramento, licet non sine interiori poenitentia, quam ipse in ea per gratiam est operatus" (*Ibid.*, q. 84, a. 5, ad 3m; cf. q. 72, a. 2, ad 1m).

“Christus secundum quod homo instituit sacramenta,” to mean that, in instituting the sacraments, the humanity of Christ was the instrument of His divinity.

But St. Thomas teaches that the human nature of Christ had some principality of agency over the sacraments; and this, admittedly, can be well explained by citing the twofold headship Christ holds: (1) over the ministers of the church, who are the vicars of Christ in sacramental administration; and (2) over the sacraments, since they operate as separated instruments, whereas the humanity of Christ operates as a united instrument. Does St. Thomas' teaching warrant our saying anything more on the principality of agency exercised by the sacred humanity in instituting the sacraments?

We are now in a position to summarize the teaching of St. Thomas on all the matters investigated in this study and to make an application, by way of further clarification, to the commonly taught thesis, “Christus secundum quod homo instituit sacramenta.”

SUMMARY AND APPLICATION

The humanity of Christ was the instrument of His divinity. As an instrument animated by a rational soul, though it received motion from the principal agent, it had also an action of its own. The activity in which His human nature was the instrument of His Godhead produced one effect, but that effect proceeded from two distinct principles, each elicitively active in the operation. His human will shared in the action of the divine will; each acted in communion with the other.

Christ's human soul, as the instrument of the Word of God united to it, had an instrumental power to work miracles ordainable to the end of the Incarnation. It could do everything He willed to be done by His own power, but what He willed to be done by divine power, it could accomplish only as the instrument of His divinity. In the latter case, His wisdom and knowledge would guarantee that due subordination of the human will to the divine will would be safeguarded, and that He would not will anything to be done by merely human power if divine power were necessary for its accomplishment. The harmony between His two wills would guarantee that everything the human will willed absolutely, would be accomplished.

In meriting, in making atonement, and in offering sacrifice, the hu-

man will of Christ was the principal agent, the sole elicitive principle. In discussing these acts, St. Thomas does not use the expression, "humanitas fuit instrumentum divinitatis"; but the humanity of Christ was the instrument of His divinity in effecting man's salvation. In the discussion of merit, atonement, and sacrifice, a ready distinction between the agent offering the passion and the agency of the passion in effecting man's salvation justifies the omission of reference to instrumentality, and in the discussion of the efficient cause of man's salvation, the distinction justifies reference to instrumentality. In acquiring the fruits of the redemption, the humanity of Christ was the principal agent; in applying them to individual souls, it is the instrument of His divinity, and His divinity is the principal cause.

In the production of grace the humanity of Christ was the instrument of His divinity. Grace, because it gives the soul a participated likeness of the divine nature, cannot have a creature as its principal cause. In the same discussion, an analogy is drawn between the instrumental role of the sacraments and that of the human nature of Christ in producing grace. This latter instrumentality is strongly stressed by St. Thomas. It colors every discussion of the activity of Christ as Man in the production of grace, and must, therefore, be kept in mind in treating the question of His agency as Man in instituting the sacraments.

God alone can give a participation in His divine nature and produce the interior effect of the sacraments. Therefore, He alone can institute the sacraments. These statements refer to the principal cause, the agent acting by power of authority in the operations considered.

The saving power of the sacraments is derived from Christ's divinity through His humanity. His humanity is the united instrument, the sacrament the separated instrument, used by God in producing the sacramental effect. This sacramental effect Christ produces both as God and as Man: As God, He is the principal cause operating by the power of authority; as Man, He is the meritorious and efficient cause, but the efficiency is instrumental. As Man, therefore, He is the principal meritorious cause and the instrumental efficient cause of the grace which the sacraments confer. His human nature is an instrument united with His divine nature in the Person of the Word, and so as Man, He has a certain principality over the ministers of the Church

and the sacraments; as Man He has the power of excellence. By virtue of this power: (1) the merit and power of His passion operate in the sacraments; (2) the sacraments are sanctified in His name; (3) He could institute them; (4) He could produce their effect without using the exterior sacramental sign.

The humanity of Christ was the instrument of His divinity when He gave the grace of the sacrament without the external sacramental sign. We should, then, understand St. Thomas as teaching consistently that the sacred humanity was likewise an instrument of His divinity when He instituted the sacraments. To this instrumentality we now apply the data collected in our study.

The thesis, "*Christus secundum quod homo instituit sacramenta,*" should mean: (1) that Christ, by an act of His human will, determined the grace to be signified and conferred; (2) that He endowed a sign with that signification; (3) that He certainly and infallibly connected with the sign the power to produce the effect signified. The phrase, "*Christus secundum quod homo,*" refers to the operation of Christ's human nature, and the institution of the sacrament involves the elements just mentioned. Does the explanation which states that Christ as Man was the instrument in the institution of the sacraments, operating by the power of excellence communicated to His human nature by God, and operating as the instrument of His Godhead correctly state, and does it adequately clarify, the common theological teaching? The contention of this study is that the explanation just given is a correct statement, but not an adequate clarification, of the commonly taught thesis that Christ as Man instituted the sacraments.

It is a correct statement in the light of the synthesis of St. Thomas' teaching presented in this study. It is a necessary conclusion, if one wishes to avoid introducing inconsistency into the teaching of St. Thomas on the agency of Christ's human nature in the production of grace and the impact of the power over grace on the question of instituting the sacraments.

This explanation is not adequately clear, for it neither adduces all the factors which should enter the explanation, nor sufficiently explains the activity of the human nature of Christ in instituting the sacraments. The ordinary proof for the thesis that Christ as Man instituted the sacraments states that all the graces of the present order

are His graces; that the efficacy of the sacraments is founded in the redemption He wrought; that the merit and power of His passion operate in the sacraments. But Christ as Man is Redeemer and merited the graces which the sacraments confer. Therefore, He instituted the sacraments as Man. One could object and say: It is true that Christ as Man merited and made atonement, but His human will was the principal cause of the act. Therefore, as Man He is the principal cause of the institution of the sacraments. This is clearly not what St. Thomas teaches. Yet the proof, as commonly given, is capable of that construction.

Christ's merit and atonement are not the only factors to enter into the discussion on the agency of His human nature in instituting the sacraments. The power of His soul over grace and the harmony existing between His two wills must be considered. In the production of grace the sacred humanity is always the instrument of the divinity. The harmony existing between the two wills in Christ envisages instances in which the human will may will things to be done by divine power. In such instances there seems to be room for a distinction between election and execution: the execution of the thing willed would admittedly involve the operation of both principles, the divine and the human will; but the election as a distinct, and, in some sense, antecedent act, would proceed from the human will as the principal cause of the election. There would always be dependence on God, since all the marvelous powers and prerogatives of the sacred humanity stem from the tremendous grace of union. Christ's native wisdom and knowledge would make clear to His human soul the works that were ordainable to the end of the Incarnation. Over these works His human soul has power as the instrument of His divinity.

For example, as the instrument of the divinity, the human will of Christ could confer upon the paralytic the blessing of bodily health and the grace of the forgiveness of sins. In choosing this man in these circumstances for this double benefit, Christ's human will would be in some sense a principal cause; but His humanity would be the instrument of His divinity in working these effects. This would be the execution of things willed by the human will of Christ. This distinction and explanation is warranted by St. Thomas' discussion of the

power of Christ's soul to accomplish the things willed by His human will: His soul could do everything He willed to do by His own power; but could do those things He willed to be done by divine power only as the instrument of the Word of God.

The application of this doctrine to the institution of the sacraments would involve the following sequence: Christ as Man knew perfectly the divine plan for man's salvation hastening to glorious fulfillment in His Incarnation, birth, life, teaching, work, passion, death, and resurrection. He knew that He would institute a church to continue His redemptive work to the end of time; that His Church would be equipped to teach, rule, and sanctify men, thus continuing the threefold office of prophet, king, and priest, which He came into this world to exercise; that His Church would have sacraments and a sacrifice; that divine power was at His service to fulfill His mission; that miracles could be worked and grace conferred only by divine power. Yet He knew that He, as Man, could will that a miracle be worked and grace produced; that in working the miracle and in conferring the grace His humanity would be the instrument of His divinity.

Christ as Man also knew that divine power was required if the power to produce grace were to be certainly and infallibly connected with a sacramental sign; but that because the merit and power of His passion were to operate in the sacraments, a special relationship was established between the institution of the sacraments and His human will, which was the principal agent in offering His passion to God.

Consequently, the human will of Christ could elect that sacraments be instituted which would certainly and infallibly confer grace. But grace gives a *consortium divinae naturae*, and only God can guarantee that such an effect be certainly and infallibly produced. Divine power is, therefore, needed for the execution of the thing willed by the human will of Christ in this case. The harmony which exists between the two wills in Christ guarantees that anything the human will of Christ absolutely wills, will be accomplished, if the human powers of Christ are not sufficient for its accomplishment. As for the sacraments, the divine will accomplished their institution. In the execution, the divine will used the human will as its instrument. The sacraments exist as certain and infallible signs of grace.

CONCLUSION

The sacraments of the New Law are visible, efficacious signs of invisible grace. The agent responsible for their existence as such signs is the one who instituted them. That agent is Jesus Christ our Lord. In their institution, the divine nature and the human nature of Christ were both active. The wisdom and knowledge of Christ as Man made it clear to Him that the institution of the sacraments was ordainable to the end of the Incarnation; His human will willed that the sacraments exist. The same wisdom and knowledge made it clear to Him that only the divinity could give certainty and infallibility to the sacramental sign, because the effect it would produce would be sanctifying grace; therefore, the sacraments exist as certain and infallible signs of grace because the divinity operated as a principal cause and the humanity of Christ as an instrumental cause to institute the sacraments willed by the human will of Christ. Thus the necessary dependence on the divinity is safeguarded, and the universally taught dependence on the human will of Christ, stemming from the relation of the sacraments to His merit and passion, is harmoniously explained.

In conclusion, we may borrow and adapt a statement of Hugh of St. Victor, who contributed so notably to the development of sacramentary theology: "Sive hoc sive alio quocumque modo praedictae auctoritates exponantur, . . . nos firma fide confitemur sacramenta Novae Legis fuisse omnia a Jesu Christo Domino nostro instituta."⁵⁷

⁵⁷ *PL*, CLXXVI, 568.