

Eucharistic Sacrifice as Anti-Violent Pedagogy

Eugene R. Schlesinger 

Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA, USA

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Abstract

The Council of Trent teaches that the sacrifice of the Mass is identical to the sacrifice of Calvary, but with the crucial difference that the Mass is unbloody (nonviolent). By considering the Last Supper traditions and the theologies of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Bernard Lonergan, this article constructs an understanding of sacrifice as a transformative pedagogy. The sacrifice of the Mass allows us to reconfigure even terrible acts of violence within a nonviolent framework without denying their reality. This provides a crucial theological resource for responding to the scandal of clergy abuse.

Keywords

Thomas Aquinas, Augustine of Hippo, clergy sexual abuse, Council of Trent, eucharistic sacrifice, Bernard Lonergan, violence

Christ the Good Shepherd warned of those who would present themselves in sheep's clothing, but are hungry wolves inwardly (Matt 7:15). It has become all too clear that these predators have not only disguised themselves as sheep, but also in the garb of shepherds, as bishops and priests have preyed upon the faithful, or turned a blind eye to such predation, or worked to protect institutional reputation rather than expose and report abuse. These evils have gone on for far too long, and with the reports from the Philadelphia grand jury, and concerning Theodore McCarrick, scarified wounds have been torn open afresh. The crises of the early 2000s were neither the end of the abuse, nor of the cover-up, as it has turned out. Healing—whether personal, interpersonal, or institutional—will be a long and painful process, and in a situation of such betrayed and damaged trust, the way forward is anything but clear.

Corresponding author:

Eugene R. Schlesinger, Santa Clara University, 500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, CA 95053, USA
Email: eschlesinger@scu.edu

In such times, it can seem counterintuitive to turn our attention to the question of sacrifice, for sacrifice, it so often seems, is part of the problem. In the popular imagination, sacrifice conjures imagery of violence and bloodshed, of vengeful deities who must be sated with blood, or of murderous societies barely succeeding at keeping their own demons at bay.¹ Has not the conception of Christ's death as sacrificial been used to prop up systems of abuse, encouraging its victims to meekly submit to rough treatment just as did Jesus?² These are serious charges, and the challenges they present need to be taken seriously, for indeed the cross of Christ has been used to justify such evils, in a blasphemous perversion of its meaning.

Nevertheless, sacrifice is an inescapable concept for Catholic theology. Sacrificial understandings of the crucifixion and the Eucharist pervade the theological tradition from the earliest days of Christianity, and continue to pervade the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), and the eucharistic liturgy.³ Moreover, the Council of Trent definitively taught that both Christ's death and the Mass are sacrificial.⁴ Hence,

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1. In this regard, René Girard's influence remains pervasive: *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1977); *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, trans. Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University, 1987). See also S. Mark Heim, *Saved from Sacrifice: A Theology of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006); Stephen Finlan, *Options on Atonement in Christian Thought* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007). While I follow the theoretical commitments of several scholars who have criticized a simplistic understanding of sacrifice as violence, full stop (e.g., Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* [Oxford: Oxford University, 2006]; Sarah Coakley, "Stories of Evolution, Stories of Sacrifice" [Gifford Lecture, April 17, 2012]; John Dunnill, *Sacrifice and the Body: Biblical Anthropology and Christian Self-Understanding* [Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013]), and especially the ways in which this criticism of sacrifice tends to be premised on Whiggish conceptions of historical progress away from things cultic and Jewish, still the problem of sacrificial violence remains and must be dealt with, especially the ways in which it has fostered abuse (for which, see the next footnote).
 2. The feminist critiques of patriarchal violence masquerading under a cloak of religious justification seem especially pressing in the current climate. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn, eds., *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique* (New York: Pilgrim, 1989); Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us* (Boston: Beacon, 2001). While, once again, I believe that these criticisms apply only to a denatured and perverse understanding of sacrifice (see e.g., Dunnill, *Sacrifice and the Body*, 162–78), it seems undeniable that plenty of these perverse and denatured understandings have been and remain operative.
 3. The GIRM is explicitly sacrificial from its opening sentence, and remains so throughout. The Order of the Mass, likewise, is replete with references to offerings, oblations, and sacrifice. *The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of The Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II. Third Typical Edition* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2011).
 4. Council of Trent, Session 22 (September 17, 1562), "Teaching and canons on the most holy sacrifice of the mass" (Norman Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* [Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 1990], 2:732–36).

the question is not *whether* or not Christ's death should be considered a sacrifice, but rather *what it means* for Christ's death to be a sacrifice.

Because the notion of sacrifice is inescapable, and especially because it is at least potentially problematic, it behooves us to face this question squarely. Unexamined assumptions and faulty understandings not only bear bitter fruit, but are deadly. In this article, I examine the notion of sacrifice, especially within the doctrinal parameters established by conciliar teaching, in order to present an account of eucharistic sacrifice as an anti-violent pedagogy. Through consideration of Trent's teaching on the unbloody character of the sacrifice of the Mass and its relation to the cross, the way the New Testament uses the Last Supper accounts to frame the meaning of Christ's death, and Augustine and Aquinas's framing of sacrifice in terms of interior dispositions, I will develop an account of eucharistic sacrifice as an anti-violent pedagogy. The sacrifice of the Mass presents a transformative vision, where even terrible acts of violence are reconfigured within a nonviolent framework without denying their reality. With this account of sacrifice established, I will conclude with a consideration of how it can inform a response to the clergy abuse crisis by it restoring agency to survivors of abuse and affirming their experience, while refusing to endorse violence or abuse.

Doctrinal Parameters for Understanding the Eucharist as Sacrifice

The Council of Trent establishes the doctrinal parameters within which any Catholic understanding of the eucharistic sacrifice must abide. While the documents of the Second Vatican Council frequently refer to the eucharistic sacrifice, they tend to do so in self-conscious continuity with Trent,⁵ and, apart from an explicit affirmation that in the eucharistic sacrifice the faithful "offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It,"⁶ do not add any further dogmatic content to the definition of the sacrifice of the Mass. I shall return to the import for Vatican II in a consideration of eucharistic sacrifice's pastoral dimensions below. At this point, however, it is to Trent that we must attend, for it is Trent that sets the doctrinal boundaries for a Catholic understanding of the sacrifice of the Mass.

In his masterful history of the council, Hubert Jedin indicates that the decree on the Mass as sacrifice is "the highpoint and by far most important teaching decision of the session," even despite the inevitable weakening it suffered by being considered

5. E.g., *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963), 2, 20, 32, 47, 49, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html (hereafter cited as *SC*); *Lumen Gentium* (November 21, 1964), 3, 10, 11, 17, 28, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (hereafter cited as *LG*); *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (December 7, 1965), 2, 5, 13, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207presbyterorum-ordinis_en.html (hereafter cited as *PO*).

6. *LG* 11; *PO* 5.

separately from the Eucharist as a meal.⁷ The decree and canons both strongly assert the doctrinal position that in the Mass “a true and proper sacrifice is ... offered to God,” and close off the avenue of Protestant objections by condemning any understanding of the sacrifice of the Mass that would “devalue” the sacrifice of the cross.⁸

Because theological opinions leading up to and following upon the council’s definition have been varied, my focus here is only upon the definitive doctrinal teaching, rather than the varied theologies that led to them.⁹ Indeed, as is often the case, the final form of the decree and canons was meant to be capacious enough as to accommodate the wide range of Catholic views expressed in the debates, and allows a “free field” for subsequent theologians “to develop their speculations and theories.”¹⁰ In what follows, I will be offering my own speculative account of the sacrifice of the Mass, one which abides within the limits established by Trent’s doctrinal teaching.

The lynchpin of Trent’s doctrine on the sacrifice of the Mass is its identity with the sacrifice of the cross. While technically phrased so as to allow the minority view that the Mass is a second sacrificial act, through derivative from and dependent upon the cross, the decree clearly favors a relation of identity between the two.¹¹ Christ’s act of

7. Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Triente*, vol. 4/1 (Freiburg; Basel; Wien: Herder, 1975), 207 (my translation). See J. F. McHugh’s explanation for why the question of real presence was considered separately from the question of sacrifice. “The Sacrifice of the Mass at the Council of Trent,” in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. S. W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991), 159–60. For an account of the earlier deliberation and debate concerning the Eucharist, see Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*, vol. 3 (Freiburg; Basel; Wien: Herder, 1970), 32–52, 268–91.

8. “Canons on the most holy sacrifice of the mass,” 1 and 4 (Tanner, 2:735). While the council’s argument has generally failed to convince Protestant objectors, the anathema against those who say that the sacrifice of the Mass derogates from the sacrifice of the cross has the dual function of condemning the Protestant objection and of clarifying that any conception of eucharistic sacrifice that *does* detract from the cross is not what the church teaches.

9. In the Acta of the council, the discussion encompasses nearly seventy pages. *Concilium Tridentinum: diariorum, actorum, epistolarum, tractatum nova collectio*, ed. Societas Goerresiana, Editio 2. stereotypa, 13 vols. in 19 (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Herder, 1901–2001), 8:719–86; 8:719–86. See also the summary treatments in Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*, 3:38–50; *Geschichte des Konzils von Triente*, 4/1:180–87; Erwin Iserloh, “Das tridentinische Messopferdekret in seinen Beziehungen zu der Kontroverstheologie der Zeit,” in *Concilium Tridentinum*, ed. Regimius Bäumer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979), 341–81; André Duval, *Des sacrements au Concile de Trente* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1985), 61–150; David N. Power, *The Sacrifice We Offer: The Tridentine Dogma and Its Reinterpretation* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 58–93, 99–127; John W. O’Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council*, Sew edition (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2013), 189–90; McHugh, “The Sacrifice of the Mass at the Council of Trent,” 148–76.

10. Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Triente*, 4/1:207; Power, *The Sacrifice We Offer*, 120; McHugh, “The Sacrifice of the Mass at the Council of Trent,” 157, 178 (the quoted material above is from McHugh, 178).

11. Power, *The Sacrifice We Offer*, 120.

sacrifice was offered to the Father once and for all (*semel*),¹² and in the Mass “it is one and the same victim [Christ] here offering himself by the ministry of his priests, who then offered himself on the cross: it is only the manner of offering that is different.”¹³ This different manner of offering shall be crucial for our purposes: while on the cross Christ “made a bloody sacrifice of himself,” in the Mass he is “offered in a bloodless manner.”¹⁴ In other words, the sacrifice of the Mass is nonviolent, for in it no blood is shed. This is in contrast to the sacrifice of the cross, which, quite obviously involved violence and bloodshed. And yet the conciliar decree indicates that they are not two sacrifices but one.¹⁵

Less clear is the relation between the Last Supper and the Mass: Did Christ merely institute the Mass on the night before his passion, or did he also celebrate the first Mass? There was some debate about this question, and the answer is left deliberately vague. The decree states that Christ “offered his body and blood to God the Father under the forms of bread and wine,”¹⁶ but does not specify that this was itself a sacrificial act, in order to satisfy those who worried that a true and proper sacrifice of Christ in the Last Supper would make superfluous the sacrifice of the cross.¹⁷

This ambiguity is deepened by the way that the first canon on the Mass was rephrased, so that it no longer read that the Mass *is* a true and proper sacrifice, but rather that in it “a true and proper sacrifice is ... offered to God.”¹⁸ Between the language of Christ offering his body and blood to the Father, his commanding his disciples to do the same in the Mass, and the clearly sacrificial understanding of the Mass,¹⁹

12. Decree on the Mass, Chapters 1 and 2 (Tanner, 2:733), citing Hebrews 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28.

13. Decree on the Mass, Chapter 2 (Tanner, 2:733).

14. Decree on the Mass, Chapter 2 (Tanner, 2:733).

15. This understanding of the decree is affirmed by Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Triente*, 4/1:207, who also notes that while there were minority views, the majority opinion among the theologians and bishops was that the cross and the Mass were but a single sacrifice, even if they did not have a particularly well-developed theology of how this worked (3:341–43). See further the *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests: Issued by Order of Pope Pius V* (New York: London: Joseph F. Wagner; B. Herder, 1923), 258; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1367, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P41.HTM.

16. Decree on the Mass, Chapter 1 (Tanner, 2:233).

17. See Power, *The Sacrifice We Offer*, 105–16; Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Triente*, 4/1:180–87; McHugh, “The Sacrifice of the Mass at the Council of Trent,” 173–75.

18. Canons on the Mass, 1 (Tanner, 2:735); cf. *Concilium Tridentinum*, 8:754, 911. See McHugh’s discussion: “The Sacrifice of the Mass at the Council of Trent,” 157, 170–76.

19. The verb *offered* (*offero, offerre, obtuli, oblatum*) and the related nominal form (*oblatio*) is used to describe Christ’s action in the Supper, what he commands the apostles to do in the Mass, and the pure offering to be offered throughout the world according to Malachi 1:11 (Decree on the Mass, Chapter 1 [Tanner, 2:733]). The verb *immolated* (*immolo, immolare*) is used in the same paragraph to describe the celebration of the ancient Passover and the institution of the new Passover (Decree on the Mass, Chapter 1 [Tanner, 2:733]). See Duval’s discussion of this terminology: *Des sacrements au Concile de Trente*, 123–25, 130–35.

it is by far the most straightforward reading to understand the Last Supper as sacrificial and, hence, the first Eucharist.²⁰ Yet we must acknowledge that their precise relation is not specified. This provides a bit of latitude for our understanding of the nature of the Last Supper and its relation to the cross, with which we shall concern ourselves in the next section.

Before moving on, we can consolidate our understandings of the doctrinal parameters by which our theological account of eucharistic sacrifice will need to abide. The sacrifice of the Mass shares an identity of content with the sacrifice of Christ, and this sacrifice is a true and proper sacrifice. In both, the same victim (Christ) is offered by the same priest (Christ), with the crucial difference that the cross is a bloody sacrifice, while the Mass is a bloodless, and so nonviolent, sacrifice.

The New Testament's Eucharistic Frame

Recent scholarship has shed important light upon the relationship between the Last Supper, the church's Eucharist, and the cross. The oldest written account of the Last Supper comes from the Pauline Corinthian correspondence. Paul presents his eucharistic teaching as a tradition he has received and handed on, and crucially, the words of institution are not narrated as a liturgical act, *per se*, but rather as the warrant and justification of the liturgical practice (1 Cor 11:23–26).²¹ A similar dynamic has been detected in the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper (Matt 26:26–30, *par.*),²² and it is noteworthy that early liturgical texts such as Didache 9–10, while considering the Eucharist to be a sacrifice, contain no mention of the words of institution.²³

20. See, e.g., the arguments put forth by Maurice de La Taille, *The Mystery of Faith: Regarding the Most August Sacrament and Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ* (New York/London: Sheed & Ward, 1941), 1:110–16, 154–61; 2:3–32; Aloysius Maria Costa, *Christ's One Sacrifice in Its Threefold Mode* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1927), 74–120. This is the most natural reading of the conciliar decree, though this question may be resolved differently in terms of the history of liturgical developments.
21. See, e.g., Paul F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004), 11–15; Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, ed. George W. MacRae, trans. James W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 196. It is worth noting that even in the more fully developed rites in which the words of institution are recited, and are even the form of the sacrament, they still serve this function: to narrate the rationale for the church's liturgical observance.
22. E.g., Andrew Brian McGowan, "'Is There a Liturgical Text in This Gospel?': The Institution Narratives and Their Early Interpretive Communities," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999): 73–87, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3268225>; Matthias Klinghardt, "Der vergossene Becher. Ritual und Gemeinschaft im lukanischen Mahlbericht," *Early Christianity* 3 (2012): 33–58, <https://doi.org/10.1628/186870312799736409>.
23. Didache 9–10 (Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3d ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007], 357–61). See the discussion in Andrew McGowan, "Eucharist and Sacrifice: Cultic Tradition and Transformation in Early Christian Ritual Meals," in *Mahl und religiöse Identität im frühen Christentum: Meals and Religious Identity in Early Christianity*, ed. Matthias Klinghardt and Hal Taussig

This is a crucial realization, because it helps to clarify the distinctly cultic and sacrificial nature of the eucharistic meal. As the public meal of the Christian community, it was an unmistakably sacrificial act, and this was the case even in those traditions that did not explicitly associate the sacrifice with Christ's death on the cross.²⁴ This is not to denigrate the tradition of associating the sacrifice of the Eucharist with the cross, which, as we have seen, belongs to the earliest strata of written tradition.²⁵ Rather, it recognizes that the distinctly cultic and sacrificial nature of the Eucharist does not depend upon the crucifixion. In fact, as I shall argue, nearly the opposite is the case.

While the Council of Trent teaches us to recognize that the power and efficacy of the Eucharist depends upon the cross, because Jesus's death and resurrection are the sole source of redemption, our understanding of his crucifixion as sacrificial depends upon the Eucharist. On the face of it, the horrors of Golgotha are not sacrificial or cultic in the least. There is neither temple nor priest. The crucified die by asphyxiation (cf. Acts 15:20, 29; Lev 17:3–12), rather than slit throats. There is no consumption of the victims, either by fire or human eating. Nor is there manipulation of blood. By contrast, the Last Supper traditions contain references to the blood of the covenant being poured out, to the offering of body and blood on behalf of others, and to atonement for sins.

Here at the Last Supper, then, Jesus frames the meaning of the death he will suffer on the next day. It is not an accident of history, nor the outcome of purely immanent

(Tübingen: Francke, 2012), 191–206; *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2014), 37–39; Matthias Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft: Soziologie und Liturgie frühchristlicher Mahlfeiern* (Tübingen: Francke, 1996), 379–405.

24. On the intertwining of sacrifice and meals in antiquity see, e.g., Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, trans. Paula Wissing (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989); McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 20–33; Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft*, 29–297; “‘Nehmt und eßt, das ist mein Leib!’ Mahl und Mahldeutung im frühen Christentum,” in *Die Religionen und das Essen: Das Heilige im Alltag*, ed. P. Schmidt-Leukel (München: Hugendubel Kreuzlingen, 2000), 37–69; and the essays collected in Klinghardt and Taussig, eds., *Mahl Und Religiöse Identität Im Frühen Christentum*.
25. See further the rather interesting work of Bruce Chilton, who understands the linking of the Last Supper traditions to an understanding of Jesus's death as sacrificial as a particularly Pauline contribution (*A Feast of Meanings: Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus through Johannine Circles* [Leiden: Brill, 1994], 109–30, 149), but also sees a different sacrificial perspective operative in his reconstruction of the Last Supper(s), which he understands as a culmination of Jesus's practices of table fellowship connected with his protest against the temple. Chilton's understanding of “this is my body” and “this is my blood,” insofar as they were *ipsissima verba*, is that they were intended as a substitute for the temple sacrifice. Jesus's meal practices, in other words, were the acceptable sacrifice (63–74). While I do not follow this reconstruction (see the criticisms of Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 214–41), it is still instructive to note the inherently sacrificial character of the Last Supper traditions.

political forces that overtakes him,²⁶ but rather something he undertakes deliberately, voluntarily, and with the intent of redemption. It is a fully agential act on Jesus's part.²⁷ It is because of the Last Supper that we are able to understand Jesus's death as sacrificial.

There are, of course, other cultic overtones to the ways the Evangelists report Jesus's death. The release of Barabbas parallels the scapegoat from the Day of Atonement (Matt 27:15–26, par.; cf. Lev 16:8–20),²⁸ the passion occurs at the Passover (though the Passover lamb was not among the atoning sacrifices in Israel's cult),²⁹ and the Fourth Gospel places Jesus's crucifixion at the same time as the offering of the Passover lamb (John 19:14). However, these are retrospective theological judgments, rather than anything unambiguously or explicitly cultic in the events themselves. The earliest witness of Jesus's death as sacrificial is the Last Supper traditions, and within the Gospels' narrative, the Supper serves to frame Jesus's death and its meaning.

This recognition that the Last Supper was cultic, while the cross is not, led Maurice de La Taille to a rather clever, but still problematic, understanding of the relationship between the Supper and the cross. His working definition of sacrifice required that any true and proper sacrifice involve an oblation or offering, an immolation or the destruction of its victim, and the acceptance of the offering.³⁰ The cross had no obvious oblation; this was found in the Last Supper. The Supper, though, had no immolation; this was accomplished on Calvary. The offering's acceptance was to be found in the

26. Nevertheless, it has been an important contribution of liberation theology to recognize that Jesus's crucifixion was indeed the outcome of political forces. E.g., Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, Salvation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, 15th Anniversary ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 130–35; Ignacio Ellacuría, *Freedom Made Flesh: The Mission of Christ and His Church*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976), 27–50; Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. Paul Burns and Francis McDonagh (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 195–211.

27. See Eugene Rogers's powerful reflection of the Last Supper as a "deathbed wedding," which transforms Jesus's impending violation into a gift-of-self: *Sexuality and the Christian Body: Their Way into the Triune God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 250–56. Or, in the words of the Johannine Jesus, "I lay down by life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own" (John 10:17–18). See also McHugh's evaluation that "the essence of Christ's sacrifice lies not in the fact that he was put to death, but in the fact that he willingly accepted death" ("The Sacrifice of the Mass at the Council of Trent," 180); and Robert Daly's treatment of the Last Supper as an act of self-interpretation on Jesus's part (*Christian Sacrifice: The Judaeo-Christian Background before Origen* [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1978], 219–25).

28. Perhaps the most comprehensive accounting of the influence of the Day of Atonement on early Christianity, including but not limited to this aspect of the synoptic Gospels, is Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity: The Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the Fifth Century* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

29. See Daly's helpful discussion of the role of the Passover ritual in the Hebrew Bible in his *Christian Sacrifice*, 196–207.

30. De La Taille, *The Mystery of Faith*, 13–17.

resurrection, and the continued exercise of Jesus's heavenly priesthood. Hence, the Last Supper and the cross were successive stages in a single sacrifice, which, following Trent, was numerically one.³¹

Ingenious as this argument is, it fails to uphold the crucial doctrinal parameters established by Trent. On this accounting, it would seem that neither the cross nor the Eucharist are true and proper sacrifices, for each lacks something essential to its character as a sacrifice. In contrast, the council was clear that Christ's death was fully effective for accomplishing redemption and needs no supplementation, and that, though the Eucharist derives all of its power and even the content of what it is from the cross, it lacks nothing essential to its being a sacrifice.³²

La Taille has noted something crucial about the New Testament accounts, but because his understanding of sacrifice demands that there be an immolation, destruction, or death, his solution stumbles.³³ However, there is no reason to require that this be present for there to be a true sacrifice. In the next section, we shall find resources in the tradition for understanding sacrifice differently than this. For now, though, we can observe (1) the presence of traditions that understood the Eucharist sacrificially, but without reference to Jesus's death, and (2) the teaching of Trent that in the Eucharist we are dealing with a bloodless, which is to say, nonviolent sacrifice. This teaching about bloodless sacrifice ought to prevent us from immediately looking for some violent component in this or any sacrifice.

Instead, we can understand sacrifice as simply Jesus's gift of himself. He truly gives himself to the Father in the visible species of bread and wine at the Last Supper, and in his own proper species upon the cross. The sacrifice of Christ is his definitive and unsurpassable gift of himself in whatever form it takes. Returning to the Tridentine distinction between bloody and bloodless sacrifice, we gain a crucial ingredient for our understanding of Christ's sacrifice. The cross was indeed a bloody, violent act. On it the sacrificial victim was indeed killed. Our understanding of sacrifice cannot avoid the reality of Jesus's suffering. All too often, nonviolent accounts of sacrifice tend to also be sanitized accounts, missing the agonized blood, sweat, and tears of the man of

31. De La Taille, *The Mystery of Faith*, 36–46, 51–57, 136–58. La Taille's theory receives a fairly glowing approval from McHugh, "The Sacrifice of the Mass at the Council of Trent," 179–80.

32. See the fairly trenchant critiques of Aloysius Costa on this count in *Christ's One Sacrifice*, 30–41.

33. Despite Costa's incisive criticism in *Christ's One Sacrifice* (134–35, 140–41) of La Taille, his same insistence that there be a destruction of the victim in order for a sacrifice to be such, also leads Costa to some strange conclusions, namely that the priest's communion represents the destruction of Christ's body in its sacramental species. Charles de Condren likewise strives to find the elements of consecration, oblation, and immolation in both Calvary and the Eucharist, though he locates them elsewhere, seeing them unfolding throughout Christ's incarnate life; see his *The Eternal Sacrifice*, trans. A. J. Monteith (London: Thomas Baker, 1906). In contrast, Barnabé Augier argues in "Le sacrifice" (*Revue Thomiste* 12 [1929]: 207–11) that immolation is not essential to the idea of sacrifice.

sorrows.³⁴ At the same time, Jesus frames the meaning of his sacrifice upon the cross by means of the bloodless sacrifice of the Eucharist. This indicates that the meaning of Christ's sacrifice does not depend upon suffering or violence. It is *essentially* nonviolent, even though in its actuality it did involve violence.

This then, at once upholds the reality of Jesus's experience of violence. Its reality is not denied. But by framing the meaning of this event in explicitly nonviolent terms, the trauma of Calvary is reconfigured within a nonviolent framework. This understanding allows us to affirm the numerical identity of the cross and the Mass, and to affirm that the cross is the sole source of redemption, and to do so in a nonviolent context that at the same time avoids sanitizing the cross or denying the reality of violence.

Sacrificial Pedagogy

From the Council of Trent, we have gained an understanding of the Mass as a nonviolent sacrifice that is, at the same time, the same sacrifice as Jesus's death on the cross. When read in conjunction with the way the New Testament uses the Last Supper to frame the meaning of Jesus's death as sacrificial, we gain a resource for understanding Jesus's sacrifice as *essentially* nonviolent, without thereby sanitizing it so that the violent character of his passion is not obscured. What he undergoes is violent, but its meaning, its most basic intelligibility, is not violent. Three voices from the theological tradition provide us a means of rounding out this consideration, and developing an understanding of the Mass as an anti-violent pedagogy.

Augustine and True Sacrifice

Augustine of Hippo's understanding of sacrifice is best understood within the overall sweep of his conception of the journey to God through the incarnate Christ. This journey to God involves a pedagogy of humble purification, as one's desires are set in order and one learns to enjoy God alone, and to use created things for the sake of enjoying God.³⁵ Augustine's discussions of sacrifice tend to be limited to contexts of

34. Here I fear that Daly's account of sacrifice falters. In *Christian Sacrifice* (87–136), he correctly notes that the point of sacrificial bloodshed is not to kill the victims per se, but rather to offer their lives to God (cf. Lev 17:14). However, on this accounting the killing of the animal becomes merely a prerequisite for obtaining its blood/life to offer to God; see his *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 37. Yet this passes over entirely the fact that the animal has indeed bled out and died, rather than simply having a bit of blood drawn in an ampule or the like. Instead, Klawans is right to point us to the larger questions of how societies treat their animals. On this score, our ostensibly non-sacrificial culture would probably receive poorer marks than the sacrificial and pastoralist Israelites; see his *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 40.

35. See, e.g., *On Christian Doctrine* 1.3–5, 10, 11–14, 22, 34; *Confessions* 7.18; *De Trinitate* 4. *Præmium*; 13.7; *Tractates in the Gospel of John* 26.1–5. Important treatments of this motif are found in Matthew Levering, *The Theology of Augustine: An Introductory Guide*

anti-pagan polemic, in which he opposes the practice of theurgy, which promised an alternative path of purification through sacrifices offered to daemonic mediators.³⁶ While this is not the only context in which he discusses sacrifice, it is the predominant one. This helps us to clarify that sacrifice is part of an overall pedagogy of desire for Augustine.

The fullest discussion of sacrifice occurs in Book 10 of *The City of God*, where Augustine provides two related definitions of sacrifice.³⁷ On the one hand, material acts of sacrifice, such as those offered in the Old Testament, are *sacramenta* of inward dispositions towards God, the very dispositions in which we are trained in the Christian pedagogy of desire. On the other hand, a true sacrifice is every act, especially a merciful act, by which humans are united with God in a holy society, and which is ordered towards the final end of happiness in God.³⁸ The preeminent instance of true sacrifice is Christ's sacrifice, by which, in his mercy, he has returned humanity to God.

Though Augustine's definition of true sacrifice includes "every" act that unites to God, there is only one sacrifice that he regards as a true sacrifice: Christ's own, to

to His Most Important Works (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 1–17; Brian E. Daley, "A Humble Mediator: The Distinctive Elements of St. Augustine's Christology," *Word and Spirit* 9 (1987): 100–17; Tarcisius J. van Bavel, *Recherches sur la christologie de Saint Augustin: L'humain et le divin dans le Christ d'après Saint Augustin* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1954); Michel René Barnes, "The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400," *Modern Theology* 19, no. 3 (2003): 329–55, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0025.00226>; Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2010), 142–70; and David Vincent Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2013), 79–134.

36. E.g., *Confessions* 10.42–43; *De Trinitate* 4.13–14; *s. Dolbeau* 26, *passim*; *City of God* 10, *passim*. On the context of Augustine's sacrificial discourse, see Eugene R. Schlesinger, "The Sacrificial Ecclesiology of *City of God* 10," *Augustinian Studies* 47, no. 2 (2016): 137–55, <https://doi.org/10.5840/augstudies201681625>.
37. *City of God* 10.5. On sacrifice in Augustine's thought more generally, see Joseph Lécuyer, "Le sacrifice selon saint Augustin," in *Augustinus Magister*, vol. 2 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), 905–14; Lawrence F. Frankovich, "Augustine's Theory of Eucharistic Sacrifice" (PhD diss., Marquette University, 1976); John F. O'Grady, "Priesthood and Sacrifice in *City of God*," *Augustiniana* 21 (1971): 27–44; Roland J. Teske, "The Definition of Sacrifice in the *De Civitate Dei*," in *Nova Doctrina Vetusque: Essays on Early Christianity in Honor of Fredric W. Schlatter, S.J.*, ed. Douglas Kries and Catherine Brown Tkacz (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 153–67; and James K. Lee, *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2017), 95–123.
38. *City of God* 10.6. See further Basil Studer, "Das Opfer Christi nach Augustins 'De Civitate Dei' X,5–6," in *Lex orandi, lex credendi: Miscellanea in onore di P. Cipriano Vagaggini*, ed. Gerardo J. Békés and Giustino Farnedi (Rome: Editrice Anselmiana, 1980), 100–101; Ghislain Lafont, "Le Sacrifice de la cité de Dieu: Commentaire au *De Civitate Dei* Livre X, ch. I à VII," *Recherches de science religieuse* 53 (1965): 204–5; Levering, *Theology of Augustine*, 122–23; Schlesinger, "The Sacrificial Ecclesiology of *City of God* 10," 147–48.

which all other sacrifices have ceded their place.³⁹ While he also identifies the Eucharist as true sacrifice, it is clear that he regards this as another instance of Christ's one sacrifice.⁴⁰ Similarly, the ethical life and the unity of the church are regarded as instances of Christ's sacrifice. "The merciful act of Christ whereby he unites humanity and God in a fellowship encompasses and enfolds all other sacrifices to the extent that they are not *other* sacrifices, but facets of this one true sacrifice."⁴¹

In this way, Augustine lays the groundwork for the subsequent theological tradition,⁴² including the eventual teaching of Trent about the identity between Mass and Calvary. Moreover, when eucharistic sacrifice is offered "the Church ... is taught to offer herself through Him."⁴³ Hence, sacrifice names a particular symbolic expression of a particular interior disposition, and through the sacrifice of the Mass, Christians enter into this disposition, and are trained in a pedagogy of desire. By this pedagogy, the church can be led from violence into a fuller life and be converted to a stance of solidarity and care for those who have suffered violence at the church's hands.

Thomas Aquinas and Sacrifice as the Essence of Religion

As was so often the case, Thomas Aquinas received and refined this understanding of sacrifice from Augustine.⁴⁴ In Thomas's discussion of sacrifice, we find a

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39. *City of God* 10.20. See further Bonner, "Doctrine of Sacrifice," 109–10; Lafont, "Le Sacrifice de la cité de Dieu," 204–7; Teske, "Sacrifice in CivDei," 159–60; Schlesinger, "The Sacrificial Ecclesiology of *City of God* 10," 148.
40. *City of God* 10.6, 20. Bonner, "Doctrine of Sacrifice," 106; Lécuyer, "Le sacrifice selon saint Augustin," 906; Lafont, "Le Sacrifice de la cité de Dieu," 205–7; Schlesinger, "The Sacrificial Ecclesiology of *City of God* 10," 146. Contra Frankovich, "Augustine Sacrifice," 110–24.
41. Schlesinger, "The Sacrificial Ecclesiology of *City of God* 10," 148.
42. At the same time, see the important work of Gerald Bonner, who recognizes that Augustine himself has received and synthesized the previous Latin tradition regarding Christ's sacrifice and its relation to the Eucharist. "The Doctrine of Sacrifice: Augustine and the Latin Patristic Tradition," in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. Stephen W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991), 101–17; Gerald Bonner, "Augustine's Understanding of the Church as a Eucharistic Community," in *Saint Augustine the Bishop: A Book of Essays*, ed. F. LeMoine and C. Kleinhenz (New York: Garland, 1994), 39–63; and Gerald Bonner, "The Church and the Eucharist in the Theology of St. Augustine," *Sobernost* 7, no. 6 (1978): 448–561.
43. *City of God* 10.20 (quoting from *The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. R. W. Dyson, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998], 422).
44. On Thomas's engagement with Augustine on this question, see Richard Schenk, "Verum Sacrificium as the Fullness and Limit of Eucharistic Sacrifice in the Sacramental Theology of Thomas Aquinas: Historical Context and Current Significance," in *Ressourcement Thomism*, Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2010), 190, 193–94; and R.-Michel Roberge, "'Interius spirituale sacrificium' selon saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 28, no. 2 (1972): 131–32, 138–39, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1020295ar>.

transposition into a new context of the core of Augustine's understanding of sacrifice as expressive of one's relationship to God and ordered to beatitude in God. Augustine's discussions of sacrifice tend to occur within the context of opposing pagan worship. Aquinas abstracts it from those limiting particulars and allows us to more clearly see the concept's value more generally and not just polemically.

Aquinas's discussion of sacrifice places it within the genus of signs, and notes that external acts of sacrifice are offered in order to signify the interior posture towards God that is proper for creatures towards their creator and final end, whereby "the soul offers itself to God."⁴⁵ Visible sacrifices, then, are external enactments of the virtue of religion, which, because we are sensory beings, it is proper for us to offer.⁴⁶ In other words, while that which is signified by sacrifice is an inward reality, the external component is not thereby made dispensable, because as material and embodied creatures, we need to express interior states externally.⁴⁷

Aquinas's treatment of sacrifice is replete with references to Augustine, and especially to Book 10 of *The City of God*. Crucially, the understanding that sacrifice is an act directed towards the joining of God and humanity in a holy and blessed fellowship appears at the crucial juncture, at which Aquinas explains that sacrifice involves acts that, while not intrinsically praiseworthy, do indeed deserve praise when they are undertaken out of reverence for God, and hence that they are expressive of the virtue of religion.⁴⁸ Hence, all are bound to offer sacrifice, because it so encapsulates the virtue of religion.⁴⁹

When we turn from the question of sacrifice in general to Thomas's consideration of Christ's death as sacrificial, the import of this understanding of sacrifice becomes more pronounced. Christ's sacrifice is not his violent death, per se, but rather the charity to which Christ gives expression by suffering this death.⁵⁰ It is for this reason that

45. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2–2., q. 85, aa.1–2, at 2–2, q. 85, a.2 (hereafter cited as *ST*). See the discussion in Roberge, "'Interior spirituale sacrificium' selon saint Thomas d'Aquin," 129–32; Barnabé Augier, "L'offrande," *Revue Thomiste* 12 (3–34): 1929; "L'offrande religieuse," *Revue Thomiste* 12 (1929): 117–31; "Le sacrifice," 198–211; and Romanus Cessario, "'Circa Res . . . Aliquid fit' (*Summa Theologiae* II–II, q. 85, a. 3, Ad 3): Aquinas on New Law Sacrifice," *Nova et Vetera* 4, no. 2 (2006): 87–88.

46. Aquinas, *ST* 2–2, q. 81, a. 7; 2–2, q. 84, a. 2.

47. See the important discussion of this theme in Roberge, "'Interior spirituale sacrificium' selon saint Thomas d'Aquin," 133–37; Augier, "L'offrande religieuse," 124–29; "Le sacrifice," 198–205. On the centrality of the will for the Aquinas's conception of sacrifice, see Augier, "L'offrande," 3–34.

48. Aquinas, *ST* 2–2, q. 85, a. 3.

49. Aquinas, *ST* 2–2, q. 85, a. 4. See further Cessario, "Aquinas on Sacrifice," 87–88; Augier, "L'offrande religieuse," 118, 122–31; "Le sacrifice," 195–97. See also Augier's recognition, at the end of his series of articles on sacrifice in Aquinas, that due to sin, humanity is rendered incapable of discharging this duty of sacrifice, and that Christ's sacrifice is the historical instantiation of the proper offering of sacrifice: "Le sacrifice du pécheur," *Revue Thomiste* 12 (1929): 486–88.

50. Aquinas, *ST* 3, q. 48, aa. 1–2. See also Schenk, "Eucharistic Sacrifice in Aquinas," 187–89.

Christ's executioners are not regarded as offering a sacrifice. Rather, Christ is.⁵¹ In fact, the agency of those who brought about Christ's death is wicked.⁵² This distinction allows for a valorization of Christ's sacrifice and, at precisely the same time, a repudiation of the violence he suffered. As Schenk puts it, Christ undergoes "criminal violence," but at the same time "transform[s] ... these sufferings into genuine sacrifice by his own love."⁵³ Similarly, the sacrifice of the Mass does not memorialize the violence Christ underwent, but our coming to share in the fruits of his passion, which is partly why it is not offered on Good Friday.⁵⁴

With this note of coming to share in the fruits of the passion, we are brought once more to an understanding of sacrifice as a pedagogy of desire. In it is summed up and expressed the proper stance of the creature before God, a posture that was perfectly enacted in Christ's passion, and into and by which the faithful enter and are trained. While the violence of Christ's death is not sanitized, neither is it valorized, which shall be crucial in our consideration of the experience of abuse survivors. The reality of the violence Christ suffered is not denied, but the essence of his sacrifice is to be found in the love for God and humanity that informed his death on the cross, and not in that violence or his suffering. What we have here is, essentially, the same as what we discerned in the New Testament: Christ's unbloody sacrifice in the Last Supper / Mass frames the meaning of his bloody sacrifice upon the cross.

Bernard Lonergan and the Notion of Sacrifice

Bernard Lonergan is perhaps an unlikely final interlocutor for our consideration here, given Raymond Moloney's frank assessment that his "name ... is not one that figures prominently in sacramental theology ... Lonergan gave us a few early writings on the question of Eucharistic sacrifice. In themselves they are not of great value."⁵⁵ However, when set within the trajectory we have been developing, the value of Lonergan's account of eucharistic sacrifice seems to increase, for it consolidates the Augustinian and Thomistic understandings of sacrifice as representing interior states, and carries that forward to consider how Christ's sacrifice can take the form of the cross and the Mass, while remaining the same sacrifice, and also how this sacrificial attitude can be elicited in us.

Lonergan begins by appealing explicitly to Augustine and Thomas for his definition of sacrifice as "a proper symbol of a sacrificial attitude," which "designates the proper stance of mind and heart towards God ... a brief synthesis of the virtue of religion."⁵⁶ Lonergan takes it for granted that human beings function by way of

51. Aquinas, *ST* 3, q. 48, a. 3.

52. Aquinas, *ST* 3, q. 22, a. 2.

53. Schenk, "Eucharistic Sacrifice in Aquinas," 187.

54. Aquinas, *ST* 3, q. 83, a. 2. See also Schenk, "Eucharistic Sacrifice in Aquinas," 189.

55. Raymond Moloney, "Lonergan on Eucharistic Sacrifice," *Theological Studies* 62 (2001): 53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/004056390106200103>.

56. Lonergan's initial definition of sacrifice is offered in "The Notion of Sacrifice," in *Early Latin Theology*, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour, trans. Michael G. Shields,

symbol-making, utilizing material acts to signify interior states. Only when there is an adequate connection between external act and interior disposition can we describe the symbolic relationship as proper.⁵⁷ This allows for the recognition that not all acts expressive of a sacrificial attitude are themselves properly sacrificial, because not all expressions are proper symbols of what they express.⁵⁸

Having made this distinction, Lonergan makes two applications of his definition. First, Christ's death on the cross is a proper symbol of his sacrificial attitude in willingly accepting death for the sake of redemption.⁵⁹ Second, the Eucharist is a proper symbol of the cross, which is itself a proper symbol of Christ's sacrificial attitude.⁶⁰ While Lonergan will appeal to the transitive property from mathematics to bear this out, such that because the Eucharist is a proper symbol of Christ's sacrificial attitude it also properly symbolizes that attitude, I am unpersuaded that this step is necessary. It would seem that we could simply say that both the sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass properly symbolize Christ's sacrificial attitude, and so both are informed by the same reality. However, this is a relatively minor demurrer, and shall not make a great difference in what follows.

The Eucharist's character as a proper symbol of Christ's sacrificial attitude has a twofold character. It properly and essentially expresses Christ's intentionality in dying, and properly and accidentally expresses the appropriation of that same sacrificial attitude in Christ's members. In this latter case, it is only accidentally expressive of the sacrificial attitude of Christ's members because their having this sacrificial attitude or not adds nothing to its intelligibility. In other words, all that is required for Christ's sacrifice to be what it is has already been accomplished by Christ. Yet, by sharing in the sacrificial meal of the Eucharist, Christ's members come to share in the same attitude that constitutes Christ's sacrifice's meaning.⁶¹

Thus far what we have encountered in Lonergan amounts to, essentially, a more precise articulation of the teachings of Augustine and Aquinas. By identifying the intelligibility of Christ's sacrifice in his sacrificial attitude, which is properly represented on the cross and in the Mass, Lonergan gives us a coherent way of upholding the identity between Calvary and the Mass: their meaning is identical.⁶²

Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 19 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2011), 5, while his appeal to Augustine and Aquinas occurs immediately afterward (7). See the discussion in Joseph C. Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning: Critical Metaphysics and Contemporary Sacramental Theology* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2014), 188–92.

57. Lonergan, "Notion of Sacrifice," 9–13.

58. This recognition serves to clear up a potential ambiguity from earlier in my argument, when I suggested that Christ's sacrifice is his self-gift. While an attitude of self-giving informed all of Christ's actions, only the Eucharist and the cross are so invested with this attitude as to be proper symbols of it. Hence, their uniqueness as Christ's sacrifice is maintained. See also Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning*, 192.

59. Lonergan, "Notion of Sacrifice," 13.

60. Lonergan, "Notion of Sacrifice," 13–17.

61. See also Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning*, 204.

62. See also Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning*, 197–201.

His account's utility increases, though, when he considers the causes of sacrifice, specifically the formal cause. Lonergan begins with a cursory treatment of sacrifice through the lens of Aristotelian causality: the exemplary cause of sacrifice is the offering of oneself to God, which because it is not a symbol, is not a sacrifice in the proper sense, but rather that which sacrifice aims to represent.⁶³ The final cause of sacrifice is the worship of God, such that sacrifice is "a compendious symbol of the finality of the universe towards God."⁶⁴ The efficient cause is typically the one who offers the sacrifice, though God is also an efficient cause of sacrifice.⁶⁵ The material cause of sacrifice is that which is offered, that is to say, the victim of the sacrifice, while the formal cause is that which is offered under the formality of being offered, which is to say the victim as victim.⁶⁶

Lonergan then further distinguishes between sacrifice's substantially formal cause and its modally formal cause, and it is this distinction that affords the precision we need at this juncture. As a substantially formal offering, Christ's sacrifice is his act of giving his body and blood: this is what the sacrifice is. When we consider this sacrifice according to its modally formal character, we recognize that the formality of the offering is present even when there are modal differences. Among these differences, Lonergan includes: the sacrifice as bloody or unbloody, in Christ's proper species or under the species of bread and wine, through the ministerial priesthood or not.⁶⁷

The payoff of this distinction is that it allows us to recognize the formality of sacrifice quite apart from the violent associations that often accompany it in the popular imagination:

Offering, immolating, giving, and so on, are taken *materially* when the formal mode is present but prescinding from the essential idea of sacrifice; for example, what people, led by their senses and imagination, look upon as the essence of a sacrifice: the actual shedding of blood, the killing or burning of a body ... and the rest ... It is quite inappropriate to proceed from a material mode (from the shedding of blood, for example) to the essential notion of oblation, donation, immolation ...⁶⁸

In other words, the meaning of sacrifice depends upon its formality, not upon modal distinctions, such as whether or not blood is shed. Hence, the meaning of Christ's sacrifice remains the same whether it is in the mode of a violent death upon the cross, or the nonviolent mode of a shared meal: both are his self-offer for the sake of redemption.⁶⁹ This allows us to recognize the numerical unity between the crucifixion and the

63. Lonergan, "Notion of Sacrifice," 29.

64. Lonergan, "Notion of Sacrifice," 29–31, at 31.

65. Lonergan, "Notion of Sacrifice," 31.

66. Lonergan, "Notion of Sacrifice," 33.

67. Lonergan, "Notion of Sacrifice," 35.

68. Lonergan, "Notion of Sacrifice," 35.

69. Lonergan, "Notion of Sacrifice," 43–45. See also Brian McNamara, "Christus Patiens in Mass and Sacraments: Higher Perspectives," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 42 (1975): 23, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002114007504200102>; and Moloney, "Lonergan on Eucharistic Sacrifice," 57–58.

altar, to attribute all salvific efficacy to the cross, and yet to interpret the bloody sacrifice of the cross through the lens of the unbloody sacrifice of the Eucharist.

Moreover, through the Eucharist, the same disposition that constitutes the meaning of Christ's sacrifice comes to inform those who share in the meal. In the sacrament, the faithful are exercised in a pedagogy of desire, one capable of reconfiguring the reality of violence into a nonviolent framework, as the horror of Golgotha is transformed into the joys of the common table. Tragically, countless participants in the eucharistic meal have suffered their own private Golgothas at the hands of the very men who consecrate the sacrament. Does Christ's sacrifice, enacted in the Eucharist, offer the hope of transformation and renewal in circumstances so grave as theirs?

“Feed my lambs”: Sacrificial Reconfiguration in the Shadow of Clergy Abuse

It would be hopelessly naïve, and indeed callous, to expect the foregoing account of eucharistic sacrifice to resolve the current crisis of clergy abuse. Nevertheless, as the Eucharist lies at the heart of the church's being—the source and summit of all its life—there ought to be some connection between a proper understanding of the sacrifice of the Mass and this crisis which threatens to shake the church's life to the foundations. In light of the unfolding crisis, this account of the Eucharist offers three resources and/or correctives for the church.

First, the distinction between the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass and the bloody sacrifice of the cross allows us to recognize the reality of violence. This is essential in a climate where the experience of the survivors of abuse has been silenced and denied. For too long, the hierarchy has looked the other way, either failing to act upon credible allegations of abuse, or acting through measures designed to protect abusers and institutional reputation. The ability to recognize the violence of the cross in distinction from the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass grants us the capacity to recognize and name violence, rather than avoiding or sanitizing those aspects of reality with which we would rather not have to engage. In our desire to avoid underwriting problematic accounts of redemptive violence, we must avoid the ironic silencing or denial of the experience of those who have undergone violence or abuse.

At the same time, the numerical identity and modal distinction between the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass and the bloody sacrifice of the cross allows us to ensure that the experience of violence does not get the last word. The formality of Christ's sacrifice does not depend upon the violence he suffered, but rather the loving disposition that informed his death on the cross. Therefore, appeal to sacrifice as a category is not an appeal to violence. Crucially, the faithful's call to participate in Christ's sacrifice through the Mass is not a call to undergo violence or abuse. For too long the image of Christ as sacrifice has been appealed to within abusive frameworks. This understanding firmly and decisively disallows such a perspective, because the abuse that Christ suffered was a sin, and not a sacrifice pleasing to God.

This is not to say that the survivors of abuse cannot find solace in Christ's solidarity with them in their suffering,⁷⁰ but it is to say that this suffering is not the meaning of the sacrifice into which they are called, but rather, quite the opposite. Yet Christ has lived out his sacrifice within the throes of violence and abuse, so that even in such wretchedness, his life can be found and can come to those who have been abused. Moreover, given the way the New Testament accounts use the unbloody Last Supper to frame the meaning of the bloody cross, this account allows us to reinterpret and reconfigure the meaning of Christ's sufferings within a nonviolent framework. In this way we avoid essentializing violence and abuse. Its reality is not denied, but its experience can be transformed. The violence inflicted upon Christ and upon the faithful is an execrable offense, not a sacrifice pleasing to God, but it can be transformed.

The Second Vatican Council decisively recovered the centrality of the full, active, and conscious participation of all the faithful in the liturgy. The church's worship of God is a dynamic act into which all Christians are drawn, and into which they are called to intentionally enter. This coheres rather nicely with the pedagogical character of the eucharistic sacrifice that we have retrieved from Augustine, Aquinas, and Lonergan. This deepened and intentional engagement with the liturgy extends explicitly to the sacrificial dimension of the Mass. *Lumen Gentium* describes the laity's participation in the Eucharist in terms of "offer[ing] the Divine Victim to God, and offer[ing] themselves along with It."⁷¹ Hence, from Vatican II we gain an explicit affirmation that the eucharistic sacrifice is not merely a matter of presenting Christ's sacrifice to the Father, though it is that, but also an occasion for the faithful to enter into that sacrifice and make it their own. The daily sacrifice of the Mass celebrates the transformation of violence into nonviolence, and exercises us in this anti-violent pedagogy, as Christ's dispositions come to be more fully our own.

This is not to suggest that the Eucharist is a magical means whereby the transformation of violence occurs. The contribution is more nuanced than this and occurs in two steps. First, the relationship between the Eucharist and the cross allows us to see that violence can be reconfigured within a nonviolent framework without denying its reality or sanitizing it. Hence, it presents us with a theoretical commitment to the possibility of such reconfiguration. Second, participation in the eucharistic sacrifice exercises us in a pedagogy whereby these dispositions, which were first in Christ, become increasingly our own. It provides, then, a resource for the church as it seeks healing from violence: both perpetrated and suffered. It will neither cure the church of its violence nor restore survivors of abuse to wholeness as such, but it is a resource for that important work, both conceptually and practically.

70. On the solidarity of God in Christ with those who suffer, see, e.g., Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator: A View from the Victims*, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001); Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. Aidan Nichols (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005), 89–181; and Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1993), 492–509.

71. LG 11. See also PO 5.

Finally, this account of sacrifice recovers and reasserts agency. By virtue of their baptism, Christians share in Christ's royal, priestly, and prophetic offices.⁷² In another essay, it would be helpful to develop the implications of the prophetic and royal dimensions of membership in Christ, exploring the potential for lay people, and especially survivors, to prophetically denounce violence and abuse and announce the alternative embodied and enacted by Jesus Christ, and to be more fully incorporated into the counsels and leadership of the church, giving shape to alternative structures better equipped to avoid clericalism, abuse, and other sorts of misused power. For now, though, in keeping with the focus on sacrifice, I shall focus on the priesthood of the laity.

Our society talks a good deal about victims, by which we tend to mean innocent sufferers. The category of victimhood is a sacrificial term, but one whose use in such contexts is gravely distorted. Christ is a sacrificial victim, but not a victim in this colloquial sense of the word. His act of instituting the Eucharist at the Last Supper asserts his agency. What will befall him later that evening and the next day are not simply misfortunes by which his life is taken from him. Instead, he gives himself: under the species of the bread and wine, and also in his own proper species. His sacrifice consists not in his being the patient of his passion (the victim), but in his being the agent in a radical gift of self (the priest).

The notion of priesthood strongly reasserts the agency of survivors of abuse. Although abusers, through coercion and violence, would steal away the agency of those whom they abuse, reducing them to victims, the priestly and agential dignity of the baptized remains ineffaceable because baptismal character is indelible.


Moreover, properly speaking, a victim is a sacrificial offering, not just someone who is mistreated. As we have noted above, this violence is not part of the intelligibility of sacrifice. While Christ's sacrifice does determine their existence, the abuse they have suffered does not, and while they are called upon to enter more fully into Christ's sacrifice, there is no call for them to endure abuse, to submit to it (meekly or otherwise), or to remain silent or passive in its face. Neither their response to what they have experienced, nor their path from its horrors into wholeness and healing is predetermined or scripted. Different individuals will, no doubt, find different paths to healing. They have both the right and the responsibility to find the way, and as they do so the church must be ready to hear, to learn from, and to support them in this journey.

In the meantime, as the church continually offers the sacrifice by which God "willed to reconcile us to [him]self," and is thereby made "an eternal offering" to God,⁷³ we are all—clergy and laity, people and hierarchy—offered the opportunity to be exercised in Christ's anti-violent pedagogy. Sharing in the Mass forms participants in Christ's own dispositions, and grants a renewed vision wherein violence is overtaken by love. To share in this sacrifice is to offer oneself for the work of anti-violence, and to stand against it and work to eradicate it in all forms. To this Christ beckons the church, offering his body and blood as the end of all victimhood, and drawing us into the same outlook and the same work.

72. *LG* 10–12.

73. Eucharistic Prayer III (Roman Missal, 653).

ORCID iD

Eugene R. Schlesinger  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6300-8072>

Author Biography

Eugene R. Schlesinger (PhD, Marquette University) is lecturer in religious studies at Santa Clara University. He specializes in systematic theology, with a particular focus on ecclesiology and sacraments. He is the author of *Missa Est! A Missional Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Fortress, 2017), and *Sacrificing the Church: Mass, Mission, and Ecumenism* (Lexington / Fortress Academic, 2019).